SCOTTISH MASONIC FURNITURE

Stephen Jackson

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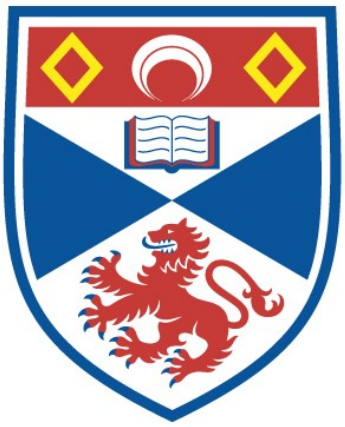

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MPhil

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ABSTRACT

This thesis will identify and describe a distinct furniture sub-group previously largely unknown. Chests, chairs, pedestals and other items from all over Scotland, surveyed by the author, will be related to the aims, purposes and social character of Scottish freemasonry. The focus will be on the period 1730-1840 although developments since 1840 will also be discussed. The individual circumstances surrounding production together with the relationship between producers and consumers of this furniture will be investigated, documentary evidence being utilised where possible. The emblematic content of the furniture will be analysed with reference to the mythology and iconography of freemasonry. Comparisons will be made with two groups of related material: English masonic furniture and the Scottish trade incorporation Deacon's chair. It will be argued that the contrasts between Scottish and English masonic furniture embody distinctions between English and Scottish freemasonry as much as distinctions between two nations. Freemasonry was in part a product of the culture of the trade incorporation yet comparisons of Master's chairs with Deacon's chairs will demonstrate the divergence that took place between the two institutions during the eighteenth century. The majority of the items surveyed are chairs and consequently the masonic Master's chair will be considered as a ceremonial, and on occasion, commemorative chair. In conclusion, this thesis will contend that, while masonic furniture in Scotland, and by extension throughout the United Kingdom, forms a coherent furniture sub-group, the form and style of such furniture varied greatly and that at no time did there exist an independent masonic style.

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The photographs used in this thesis are the author's own except where a source is given. Such references are to the Bibliography. I am grateful to Bruce Pert, however, for working several of the prints. I am also grateful to David Jones for allowing me to reproduce the photographs of Catalogues 14 and 15.

All inaccuracies and errors are, of course, my own.

CONTENTS

PREFACE

Four classes of masonic object might be said to exist which partake of a common masonic material (including printed) culture. Firstly there were the objects which formed part of the material culture of the lodge, as experienced by freemasons, which did not differ from similar types of object found elsewhere. Examples of such prosaic objects would include the glasses from which members drank. Secondly there were the consumer durables directed at freemasons which were to be used in non-masonic contexts. This class of object includes a wide range of things, from coffee cans to coffin handles, bearing the most familiar masonic emblems. Thirdly one can identify works of art which were inspired by freemasonry and produced either for the use of the brethren (certain poems by Burns or the many drinking songs and hymns composed by lesser artists) or for general performance, viewing or use (Mozart's *Zauberflöte* or the architecture of Ledoux).

None of these three classes of 'object' is the primary subject of this work. Rather, I wish to examine a fourth class of object made for and usually by freemasons for masonic purposes only and dedicated to those purposes by virtue of form or decoration. This definition covers many things including print, dress and ritual objects but only the furniture which meets it will be considered here. I shall not entirely ignore the plainer furniture used alongside or the architectural shell in which it was placed but the emphasis will be upon wooden furniture and, in particular chairs, which survive in by far the greatest number. I consider masonic furniture to be what Christopher Gilbert describes as a 'coherent sub-group.'[1] Such categorisation presumes that the context and function of an object in part determine its appearance, that furniture history cannot be divorced from social history. As such a category, moreover, it straddles the borders between genteel and common furniture and fashionable and vernacular styles.

The furniture discussed is largely still in the possession of the original owners and was surveyed during the period August 1994 to August 1995. The catalogue which is the result of this survey, includes furniture from 40 locations. Initial contact was made in the majority of cases by writing to the Secretary of the lodge concerned and letters were sent to 150 of the 228 lodges on the roll of the Grand Lodge of Scotland which were founded before 1830 and are still in existence. This choice was determined in part by logistical constraints (the Islands and a few Highland areas were not included). The prior investigation of printed lodge histories also enabled a number of lodges to be

[1] Gilbert 1991, p.1.

eliminated from the selection. Seventy replies were received, resulting in forty-two visits. Lodge secretaries were not asked to reply where no furniture from before 1830 was known. Visits were made only after follow-up telephone calls to ascertain what existed. Wherever contacts were unsure of the age of material, a visit was made. In the course of fieldwork in several regions six further visits were made possible by local contacts. Items presently in the care of the Grand Lodge of Scotland have also been examined. Clearly the survey cannot claim to be comprehensive yet it is probably representative and almost certainly covers the majority of the surviving Scottish masonic furniture made before 1830. In the course of this fieldwork many pieces made after 1830 were seen and a selection are included in the catalogue including representative items as well as a disproportionate number of unusual ones. The catalogue is divided into sections by furniture type and items appear in chronological order. It is beyond the scope of this work to give full descriptions and entries are intended more as extended captions.

My first chapter sets out a short history of freemasonry in Scotland in an attempt to provide contextual grounding for an unfamiliar subject. My second describes the appearance of the interior of a masonic lodge room and considers the iconography of the most familiar masonic emblems. Before describing any Scottish masonic furniture I briefly examine, in the third chapter, masonic furniture from England and the tradition of the Scottish trade incorporation Deacon's chair in an attempt to suggest the range of potential influences upon the makers, designers and purchasers of masonic furniture in Scotland between 1680 and 1840. The fourth chapter discusses in detail the material from before 1840 which was brought to light by the survey described above while the fifth continues this narrative into the present century. Throughout, I attempt to describe what was special about Scottish masonic furniture and in my sixth chapter consider issues such as the existence of a masonic style and the relationship between the masonic furniture and other ceremonial furniture.

CHAPTER 1

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT: SCOTTISH FREEMASONRY[2]

Medieval stonemasons, in common with most trades, regulated the working lives of their community through a trade society. Such societies also provided for social and religious association in the form of the fraternity. Occupational regulation took a distinct form taking its name from the building site lodge, often a lean-to workshop. During the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries other trade societies became incorporations recognised by burgh councils and received a 'seal of cause' defining their rights and privileges within the civic structure. Masons, no longer itinerants working on ecclesiastical structures but settled in burghs, were granted such recognition relatively late on (1475 in Edinburgh or 1551 in Glasgow). They were often incorporated with the wrights, the other large building trade, and sometimes other trades such as coopers.

Around the turn of the sixteenth century the stonemasons were establishing secret lodges to carry out the esoteric rituals of their craft. All trades had rituals of some sort, usually associated with that rite of passage the completion of an apprenticeship, and as part of the culture of the fraternity trades wrote for themselves legendary histories. The masons were distinct, however, in that the sophisticated nature of their work resulted in unusually pretentious claims for distinction and learning, their previous separation from other trades in an unusual emphasis on secrecy, and their relative geographical mobility in the use of secret signals and passwords conveying membership of, and hence competence in, the craft. Much of this masonic culture did not find a place in the incorporations of wrights and masons but continued informally among stonemasons.

The formation of lodges to carry out the hidden side of craft activities has been described as the initiative of one man: William Schaw, James VI's Master of Works between 1583 and 1602. Schaw issued two sets of 'statutes', in 1598 and 1599, which sought to establish a regional system of lodges in which all masons working in a particular burgh or district elected officers to regulate the trade. Within a few months of the issue of the first statutes the earliest known minutes for any masonic lodge in

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[2] The non-masonic study of 'the craft' has benefited greatly in recent years from two works by Professor David Stevenson: *Scotland's Century: The Origins of Freemasonry* and *The First Freemasons: Scotland's Early Lodges and their Members*. What follows owes a great deal to his published work and example.

the world begin.[3] Public interest in and awareness of the secrets of stonemasons is first recorded in the 1630s in Scotland in the form of references to 'the Mason Word'. The giving of this 'word' was the culmination of the initiation ceremony. The desire of government to regulate the trade was characteristic of the age but Schaw's promotion and transformation of the rituals and secret arcana pertaining to masons was a unique product of the tendency in late Renaissance thought to uncover and make use of esoteric wisdom. Exactly what proportion of the ritual and lore of freemasonry was input by Schaw is arguable. Nothing is known with certainty of early masonic practice and Schaw is a shadowy figure. The rituals we know of from the early eighteenth century, and to the present day, would not, however, have required the knowledge of a Renaissance magus to invent them.

A significant number of gentlemen and members of the nobility were involved with masonic lodges during the seventeenth century. They sought occult wisdom, and were usually broadening an existing knowledge. The appearance in the medieval 'Old Charges', or mythical history of the mason craft, of Hermes Trismegistus and ancient Egypt *assumed a new significance in the light of the intense interest in these topics during the Renaissance.*[4] An interest in the occult while unusual and considered dangerous by church and society at large was not uncommon among educated men. Freemasonry, moreover, brought together hermetic wisdom and the practical science of geometry. Among the very first initiations of gentlemen into the Lodge of Edinburgh were those of the principal master gunner of Scotland, two covenanting generals, a military engineer and a teacher of mathematics. All these men met the Vitruvian definition of the architect: three were practitioners of the science of ballistics, one built fortifications and the last, James Corss, wrote a *Practical geometry or a manual of mathematical recreations* (1666) which was addressed to *Artificers, Masons* and *Wrights* as well as engineers, surveyors and gunners.[5]

During the seventeenth century and into the eighteenth both lodge and incorporation regulated apprenticeship, working practices and conduct. Two parallel structures frequently existed, partly because in the incorporation masons were often outnumbered by wrights (three to one in Edinburgh, for example), but largely to protect the secrets of the craft from outsiders. Taking the situation in Edinburgh as a paradigm, apprenticeship registered with the Incorporation meant initiation, within a couple of years, to the grade of (Entered) Apprentice in the Lodge, and another set of

[3] Those of Aitchison's Haven, a port near Musselburgh which has long since ceased to exist, and Edinburgh.
[4] Stevenson 1988a, p.7.
[5] Stevenson 1988a, pp.27-30.

fees to be paid. Journeymen, or fellow crafts, of the incorporation became Fellow Crafts (in places referred to as masters) of the Lodge. Fellow Crafts were in theory eligible for the offices of Deacon or Warden of the Lodge yet in practice these were the preserve of masters of the Incorporation. In fact the Mason Deacon of Mary's Chapel was invariably the Deacon of the Lodge. (Where no incorporation existed it was usual for the senior officer to be styled 'Master'.) It was not until the late seventeenth century that a tri-gradal system emerged within the Lodge of Edinburgh, reflecting the reality of the distinction between master and journeyman.[6] Elsewhere the 'degrees' of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason were taken from the text of James Anderson's *Constitutions*. These pertained to the Grand Lodge of England, founded 1717, and were the basis of the Scottish imitation of 1736.[7] The offices of Master, Senior Warden and Junior Warden similarly became current in Scotland during the 18th century, appearing in Dundee, for example, in 1757.[8]

What is most notable about the activities and membership of seventeenth century lodges is their diversity. As Stevenson notes, *the role of the lodge in supervising the operative trade was sporadic and limited* although where there was a parallel incorporation the lodge could deal with internal disputes, the lodge acting as a sort of *informal subcommittee for mason affairs*.[9] By the later seventeenth century non-stonemason masters of the incorporation were becoming members of the lodge and in places such as Perth, where masons were neither numerous or powerful, the lodge may have admitted fewer stonemasons than other artisans. There is no evidence of a mason incorporation in Aberdeen during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries but a lodge had come into being by the late 1680s, the minutes of which never refer to regulation of the mason trade. The emphasis is on the social and ritual aspects of lodge activity and, above all, the operation of the 'box', the fund which provided for the sick, the aged and those who might lose their tools, shops and wares in a fire. Funerals were paid for and widows assisted. The children of deceased members might be educated and their apprenticeship paid for. The role of a lodge as benefit society grew to be of prime importance in Scotland during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

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[6] Stevenson 1988b, p.152.

[7] It is important to note, however, that while *The constitutions of the free-masons, containing the history, charges, regulations, etc. of that most ancient and right worshipful fraternity* (first edition 1723) were a codification of the practices of educated London gentlemen, their author, Anderson, was the son of the glazier of the same name who had written the regulations of the Aberdeen lodge probably towards the end of the 1680s.

[8] Although the first such arrangement known was that at Inverness from 1678. Stevenson 1988a, p.150.

[9] Stevenson 1988a, p.43 & p.20.

The relationship with the incorporation, where there was one, was by no means identical in different burghs. At Dunfermline the Deacon of the Lodge became the public Deacon of the Incorporation, not vice versa as at Edinburgh. At Dundee the Incorporation, exclusively of masons, operated as a lodge and the minute books of the former record the activities of the latter. The usual parallel hierarchies are conflated. Some lodges met outside of the burgh walls such as those of Elgin and Perth which met at the villages of Kilmolymock and Scone, respectively. During the eighteenth century these lodges continued to be named after the previous meeting place as a metaphorical reminder of independence from (actually powerlessness in relation to) the incorporation. The more frequent close relationship between incorporation and lodge is demonstrated by the fact that the present day lodges of Melrose and Dunkeld have in their possession panels painted with the arms of the mason incorporation probably once used to identify a church pew reserved for use by the craft.[10]

The participation of gentlemen varied similarly. The lodges of Haughfoot and Dunblane were created by gentlemen although with mason members. In both cases the founders lost interest and the operative membership were left to make what they could of the society. Haughfoot became extinct in 1763 while Dunblane exists to this day. In both cases the lodge was primarily a social gathering. The presiding officer of Haughfoot Lodge was known as the 'preses', or president, reflecting the linguistic preferences of an educated membership. Many lodges established by working men saw influxes of gentlemen in the period 1665-1715 but in most of these cases these men were initiated into both grades of Apprentice and Fellow Craft on one occasion, for a special fee and never returned. One senses a distinct difference between the curious and the committed among seventeenth century gentleman freemasons and despite their interest, in the majority of lodges lodge ritual was left, until the adoption of English ways in the eighteenth century, to develop at the hands of working masons.

Why masons initiated their social superiors is hard to say. The circumstances in which gentlemen came into contact with master masons might suggest how initiations came to take place but of this nothing is known. It was of course an honour, and a lucrative one, for the masons involved and in most cases trade matters would not have been dealt with nor apprentices have been present at 'meetings' where gentlemen were initiated. Yet fraternising with the lower orders, or at least the middle sort of people, was precisely what took place on a regular basis at Dunblane and Haughfoot. This, to an extent, prefigured English freemasonry of the eighteenth century although the English sort of masonry provided for the meeting together of a narrower social range

[10] There is another example in the Grand Lodge Museum. Rose 1951, p.111.

and seldom with an emphasis on stonemasons. The members of Aberdeen lodge around 1680 appear to have included four noblemen, three lairds, six professional men, ten masons, an equal number of merchants, six hammer men, three wright's, three slaters and four members of the barber-surgeon calling.[11] In Dundee several merchants, a clockmaker, a draper, a wright, a maltman, a surgeon and an officer of the excise were all initiated between 1700 and 1730.[12]

The character of Scottish freemasonry during the eighteenth century was determined partly by the seventeenth century inheritance and partly by the re-export from London of Scottish raw material fashioned into the sort of 'new private society' which was to become commonplace after the 1730s. The term 'new private society' is employed by Margaret Jacob[13] to describe assemblies of literate and affluent males meeting *out of mutual interest and not as a result of confessional affiliation, birth, or rank in society per se*...[and] *separately from their families*.[14] The process of change can be seen at work in the Lodge/Incorporation in Dundee where the language of magistracy gradually enters the minutes kept in the 'lockit book'. The building trades in Dundee were excluded from the general convenery of craftsmen, the Nine United Trades, and consequently even a limited role in local government. Yet from around 1700 terms such as *liberty*, usually found in the context of political franchise, replace *freedom*, traditionally the right to practice a trade. *Fraternity* becomes *Society* in 1732 and in 1734 a local agricultural improver is elected Deacon. English vocabulary, *Society of Free and Accepted Masons* for example, is also used.[15]

The dissemination of ritual uniformity was greatly assisted by the printing of Anderson's *Constitutions*. It is significant that an inventory of the *property* of the Lodge at Peebles on 27 December 1726 amounted to

> Ane Bible
> The Constitutions of the laws of the haill Lodges in London
> The Square
> A piece of tow.[16]

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[11] Stevenson 1988a, p.127.
[12] Jacob 1991, p.39.
[13] In her study of the political implications of European freemasonry during the !8th century, *Living the Enlightenment*. Stevenson shows that this development was not entirely an English importation: companies of archers, for example, were formed in Edinburgh in 1676 and in Kilwinning in 1688. Stevenson 1988b, pp.179-189.
[14] Jacob 1991, p.20. The Whig political clubs which flourished from the 1680s influenced in particular the culture of freemasonry in London.
[15] Jacob 1991, p.41.
[16] Rose 1951, p.100. The piece of tow, or rope, was an item used in the 'entering' of apprentices.

It was during the eighteenth century that lodges began to acquire possessions. In 1700 very few met regularly at their own premises. Most meetings took place in the back room of an inn and used the furniture available. For some lodges this continued to be the case well into the nineteenth century, the location often changing from public house to a rented hall owned by some other society. Nevertheless, by 1800 a considerable number of lodges rented permanent premises which were furnished exclusively for lodge use, or, if the hall were hired out to other convivial or religious groups or to dancing and fencing masters, contained movable masonic furniture.

From the early eighteenth century until the end of the Napoleonic wars several distinct categories of masonic lodge can be described. Among these was the 'new private society' whose membership of urbane gentlemen, entrepreneurs becoming gentlemen and artisans becoming entrepreneurs came together to discuss enlightened religion, politics and business as well as to eat, drink and be merry. Although freemasonry was distinguishable from the many other urban clubs and societies by its serious character, the culture of the punch bowl was no less entrenched among its practitioners. Many large punch bowls bearing masonic emblems survive from the eighteenth century and food and drink were consumed within the lodge room following any ritual business. When in 1735 the Deacon of the Kilwinning Lodge became the 'Master' in the person of a local laird, a stone punch bowl and ladle were purchased.[17] In June 1740 at the Lodge of Canongate Kilwinning

> for the benefit and use of the Lodge there was commissioned from London one puncheon containing 108 English gallons of Rum and one barrel containing 255_ pounds of sugar and ... Bro. Trotter advanced the money on loan for payment of same amounting to £54 17s. 7d. Sterling with interest.[18]

Stana Nenadic has recently described how the dispensation of hospitality, in particular the *noble science of making a bowl*,[19] affected the appearance of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century dining rooms in Edinburgh and Glasgow. The sort of private entertainment among males creating group cohesion which she describes was nowhere more evident than in the gentleman's masonic lodge.

Nor were political topics taboo within the eighteenth century lodge. The rhetoric of equality and brotherhood was in itself a political statement. The upper echelons of the movement attempted to negate the implications of this rhetoric:

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[17] Carr 1969, p.302.
[18] Rose 1951, p.109.
[19] John Gibson Lockhart, *Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk*, Edinburgh 1819, quoted in Nenadic 1994, p. 150.

> A good Mason...is properly said to live upon the level with all men. Yet Freemasons are by no means Levellers...order and subordination...are requisite for the welfare of every society.[20]

There may have been little need for this line of preaching for the majority of freemasons played no part in the Wilkite disturbances of the 1760s and quickly condemned the excesses of the revolution in France in 1793. Nevertheless minute books record the passing of motions in favour of the abolition of slavery and the Lodge at Cromarty appears to have been the campaign headquarters of the reform candidate during the election of 1831.[21] The Cromarty freemasons in full regalia escorted this candidate, Mr MacLeod of Cadboll, to the election in the courthouse where he was defeated by eight votes to seven before dinner at the Lodge.

Operative lodges, including those in rural areas, were increasingly simply social gatherings of, for the most part, artisans and self-employed tradesmen. The occupational composition of the membership varied, sailors and fishermen being prominent in ports for example. One of the main incentives to join, as before, was the security of a common fund for funerals, unemployment and the care of widows. Here too, however, politics and conviviality played a part in the proceedings. These lodges were less likely to have acquired furniture by 1800 yet many were prepared to undergo the expense of relatively simple chairs and tables perhaps together with a lodge banner as at Coupar Angus. There was also a significant number of military lodges during the period which appear never to have used special furniture.

A higher public profile was maintained by lodges during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries than is the case today and a common practice which illustrates this point was the laying of foundation stones 'with masonic honours'. Officers of the Grand Lodge were called upon to lay the foundation stones of numerous buildings and constructions in Edinburgh during this period, beginning with the Royal Infirmary in 1736.[22] The Royal Exchange in 1753 was followed by the North Bridge (1763), the new University building (1789), the Regent Bridge and new gaol (1815), the National Monument (1822), the George IV Bridge (1827) and the Scott Monument (1840).[23]

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[20] Rev. James Smith, *A Sermon Preached at the Chapel in Deal...1779 before the Provincial Grand Lodge of Kent*, quoted in Jacob 1991, pp.64-5.

[21] There is a vivid account of the election in an report by Hugh Miller for the *Inverness Courier*, 25 May 1831.

[22] George Drummond, the founder of the Infirmary and six times Lord Provost, was an enthusiastic member of the Lodge of Mary's Chapel and Grand Master in the 1750s. Fraser 1989, p.9.

[23] Not every public appearance was so high-minded, moreover. James Boswell, Master for a time of the Canongate Kilwinning Lodge, which sent delegates to most of the foundation stone ceremonies listed, recorded in his journal on 11 December 1775: *In the evening I went with a number of my lodge to The Recruiting Officer with Love à la Mode played by desire of the Free-Masons.* Ryskamp & Pottle 1963, pp.195-6.

Elsewhere local freemasons performed the same ceremonies for every kind of civic or other notable building. The Lodge of Kilmarnock Kilwinning, for example, attended or officiated at 23 foundation stone layings or monument unveilings between 1807 and 1878.[24] The stonemason turned journalist, Hugh Miller, described one such event in the *Inverness Courier* in 1830: the laying of the foundation stone for the United Free Gardeners' Hall in Cromarty. The Robertson's Lodge of Freemasons had been founded in the port of Cromarty in 1774 but the Free Gardeners had been set up in 1826 and until 1830 had used the hall of Robertson's Lodge.[25] Miller reported how

> the members walked in procession to the site of the intended building, accompanied by the magistrates, and by deputations of about thirty men each, from three other friendly societies of the place. Their order was as follows-
> The Magistrates, and other respectable Gentleman [sic] of the Town.
> The Committee of the Friendly Society.
> The Deputation from Robertson's Lodge of Freemasons.
> The Deputation from the Hammermen Society,
> The Members of the United Gardener's Lodge,
> Preceded by a band of Musicians.
> Mr James Grahame, as Master Mason, went through the ceremony of laying the stone, in a cavity of which were deposited the sevral [sic] coins current in the kingdom, from a sovereign to a farthing, together with the Inverness newspapers of the week, the Regulations of the different Societies of the Town of Cromarty, and a brief detail of both its past history and its present state. A modern poet has regretted that the age of mystery has passed away in which every mechanic's bible had a double meaning, one relating to his condition as a rational creature, the other to his skill as a craftsman; but even Coleridge himself, had he witnessed the ceremony of Friday last, would have been convinced that the regret was groundless. Chalices which contained corn, wine, and oil, were emptied over the stone by the Master, and there were signs made, and hieroglyphics exhibited on the occasion...an excellent and appropriate prayer was offered up by the Rev. Mr Finlayson...the streets were lined with spectators...We are informed that a party of young ladies familiar with the pageants of the fashionable world, walked more than six miles to witness the ceremony, and that they were so gratified by it as to remark, that to see such another they would readily undertake a much longer journey.[26]

This description conveys much of what it was to be a freemason in early nineteenth century Scotland. The pride of the 'brethren', including civic consciousness, is readily apparent as is the religious content of the ceremony. The magistrates are not themselves brethren but are prepared to accompany them. Elsewhere, many lodges gained the right to meet in burgh halls, including that at Campbeltown, for example, which as early as 1752 had given the town council a present of chairs, tables and forms for the new town house building.[27] Processing itself, often by torchlight, was

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[24] Dunlop, nd, pp.16-17.
[25] *Inverness Courier* 29 July 1829. I owe this reference and others from the *Inverness Courier* to David Alston. The Lodge itself acquired a hall only in 1825. *Ross-shire Journal* 1914.
[26] *Inverness Courier* 21 April 1830.
[27] Thomson 1978, p.93.

an established activity indulged in by lodges, quasi-masonic societies and trade incorporations as well as election candidates, newly-weds and, of course, funeral cortèges. As for the role of these lodges as benefit societies Miller considered that it was

> pleasing to see Friendly Societies on the increase in this quarter, as they not only give relief to the poor man when in distress, but afford him a fit subject for the exercise of those social and mental faculties, which the majority of mechanical professions seldom call into action.[28]

Reporting a decade later, however, on the laying of the Scott Monument foundation stone Miller remarked that

> the laugh, half in ridicule, half in good nature, with which the crowd greeted every very gaudily dressed member, richer in symbol and obsolete finery than his neighbour, showed that the day had passed in which such things could produce their originally intended effect.[29]

During the 1830s and 1840s freemasonry went through a fallow period in which few new lodges were chartered, many existing ones became extinct and infrequent meetings and financial difficulty were commonplace. No serious historical work exists for this period but a few suggestions as to why such a nadir was reached can be made. It was no longer fashionable for gentleman to dabble in the craft and operative lodges were increasingly unable to occupy an unofficial space somewhere between incorporation and trade union; the abolition of the privileges of trade incorporations by Act of Parliament in 1846 merely recognised the fact that such regulation had become unenforceable and anachronistic. A new Victorian bourgeois ideal of the family and domestic happiness undoubtedly affected the behaviour of middle class men. Clubs and societies of the mid-eighteenth century variety ceased to exist generally and the middle class turned its attention to more public societies with specific artistic or charitable aims. Many of these developments can be seen in operation at Perth. During the early eighteenth century the Lodge met at the Wright's Hall, there being no separate Mason's Incorporation. Senior wrights were members of the Lodge and, with the exception of all apprentice and journeyman stonemasons, the lodge was a society of wealthy and influential men. The Masters during the period 1725 to 1778 comprised three junior members of the aristocracy, the Lord Provost of Perth, four merchants, two customs officers, two professional men, seven master stonemasons, a wright, a coppersmith and a glover. Several of the tradesmen were Baillies or Deacons of their Incorporations. During the early nineteenth century, however, the Masters

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[28] *Inverness Courier* 21 July 1830.
[29] *The Witness* quoted in Rosie 1981, p.148.

were usually drawn from the building trades and were far less frequently involved in local government. As the power of the Wrights' Incorporation faltered the merchants had been drawn off to the more exclusive Lodge St Andrew. Significantly, a friendly society was established by the Lodge Scoon and Perth in 1804.

In the 1860s and 70s, however, some of the extinct lodges were pronounced 'dormant' and revived while elsewhere others were founded for the first time. The Grand Mastership in England of the Prince of Wales no doubt helped to win over recruits. From then until the 1920s freemasonry thrived reaching its apogee in many respects around the turn of the 20th century. Lodges multiplied and small towns might have several all meeting at a purpose-built hall, increasingly referred to as a 'Temple'. Masonic authors subtly reflect wider cultural changes. The Reverend R. Green, lecturing to a masonic audience in Newcastle in 1776, had described the lodge as *a place of safe retirement where we may securely enjoy generous freedom, innocent mirth, social friendship and useful instruction.*[30] By 1849 the widely read Rev. G. Oliver proclaimed that *the true definition of masonry is a science which includes all others and teaches mankind their duty to God, their neighbour and themselves.*[31] The theme of instruction is common to both writers but public duty has replaced private enjoyment. In an age in which new 'traditions' were constantly invented, civic pride continued to find an outlet in the medium of public masonic pomp. Masonic friendly societies, however, were either separated from the lodge or wound-up as the membership became increasingly middle class. Quasi-masonic friendly societies, of a 'respectable working class' persuasion, proliferated. On the eve of the National Insurance Act of 1911 in Dundee alone there were 53 lodges, tents, courts and branches affiliated to four distinct orders of Oddfellows, three of Free Gardeners and two of Foresters, the Loyal Order of Ancient Shepherds and the Hibernians, Rechabites and Orangemen.

Regrettably the upturn in the fortunes of freemasonry led to the refurbishment of most hall interiors and undoubtedly much material of interest to the furniture historian was scrapped between 1860 and the onset of the depression in the mid 1920s. It is possible to tell from lodge histories and minute books that much furniture, in many cases probably of a vernacular character, was destroyed and replaced either by locally manufactured pieces or articles purchased from one of the large masonic suppliers such as the firms of Kenning, Spencer or Goudielock. Ironically the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries witnessed the emergence of an antiquarian interest in old furniture, deriving in part from the many new commissions for ceremonial and

[30] Quoted in Jacob 1991, p.59
[31] Quoted in Sandbach 1985, p.39.

commemorative chairs. There have been a few interesting pieces made since 1945 although the manufacture of masonic furniture is now a rarity and lodges are once again under financial pressure, halls being sold and historically valuable material under threat of destruction.

CHAPTER 2

LODGE ROOM FURNITURE

None of the furniture in a lodge room is *directly* used in the conferring of degrees, the exception being 'tracing boards', on which are painted symbols and diagrams relevant to each of the three initiation ceremonies. Originally such images would have been transitory, chalked upon the floorboards and obliterated with mop and pail by the initiate in what was simultaneously an act of humility and committing to memory. The practice was gradually replaced during the eighteenth century either by chalking, or 'tracing', upon slates or by using painted floorcloths or wooden panels on which the representations were fixed.[32] In 1730 Samuel Prichard wrote an 'exposure' pamphlet, *Masonry Disected*, which mentions a *Trasil Board for the Master to draw his designs upon*.[33] These boards are not included in this survey but were, in the exemplar designed by the artist-draughtsman John Harris in 1823, influential in the dissemination of a standard symbolism. There is room to discuss briefly the floor cloths which occupied the ground space of the metaphorical lodge, the defined area in which ceremonial took place. If a tracing board were being used in place of a decorated floor cloth, placed upon an easel, laid upon a table, or propped up against a pedestal, a simple black and white tessellated floor covering, in imitation of that of the Solomaic Temple, became a popular item of 'furniture'. Prichard describes

> A Mosaick Pavement, the Ground Floor of the Lodge, Blazing Star the Centre and Indented Tarsel [= tassel] the Border round about it.[34]

This cryptic description would appear to refer to black and white squares bordered with the commonly seen black and white triangular motif. The design was more likely to have been painted upon a floorcloth than woven in a carpet.[35]

The three principal officers of the lodge have from an early date occupied specific locations within the room and among the first furniture to be provided specifically for lodge use was chairs for these men to sit in. Pedestals and torchères are also connected

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[32] The first reference to a blackboard in the *OED* is dated 1823.
[33] Knoop, Jones & Hamer 1943, p.112.
[34] Knoop, Jones & Hamer 1943, p.112. *OED*.
[35] The full difficulty of reading lodge inventories in respect of these items is highlighted by an example from the minute books of the South Saxon Lodge in 1796: *an Inlaid Marble Tressel Green Cloth Lodge Board to fold up*! Rose 1949, p.216.

with ritual in a way that seating for others, trestle tables for dining or an organ for music are not. *A Dialogue between Simon, A Town Mason, & Philip, A Traveling Mason* of around 1740 contains two diagrams of lodge room interiors, one purporting to be the 'old' form, the other the *new lodge under the Desaguliers regulation.* There is little to distinguish the two. In each the Master sits in the east with a *pedestal* while both Wardens sit in the west (no pedestals are indicated).[36] Three candles are shown in a triangular arrangement approximately to the north, west and south within the central space of the room. Prichard refers to these *three lights* as *large candles placed on high candlesticks*.[37] While both texts are exposures of English practice, Scottish freemasonry had by this date a similar system. The Wardens soon came to acquire their own pedestals and the candles, or 'lesser lights', came to be located nearby, or on the pedestals of Master and Wardens. These 'lesser lights' should not be confused with the three 'great lights', the square, compasses and Volume of Sacred Law.

The layout of lodge rooms has not greatly changed over the past 250 years and there is a basic repertoire of furniture with which every lodge will be equipped. The only substantial difference between Scottish and English lodges is the inclusion in the former of an 'altar', in the centre of the room or directly in front of the Master's pedestal, on which are placed the Bible, or 'Volume of Sacred Law', together with the square and compasses. This would appear to be an innovation of the nineteenth century, the 'great lights' previously being placed upon the Master's table or pedestal. The placing of the Wardens in the west gave way in the early eighteenth century to the arrangement shown in Figure 1[38] while a Depute Master and the Immediate Past Master were usually given places of honour to the right and left of the Master respectively. Senior and Junior Deacons[39], Secretary, Treasurer and Chaplain might all have their own appointed places and, after the mid-nineteenth century, chairs and desks.

Inventories are among the evidence available for the appearance of lodge room interiors. The minute books of the Lodge at Stornoway offer an example. The Lodge had been founded in 1767 but had languished on the verge of extinction until transformed into a friendly society in 1797. The first premises were built in 1801, a second building being erected between 1819 and 1822 at a cost of £1,365 13s. 2d. An

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[36] One distinction between the diagrams is the placement of the *Volume of Sacred Law* on the Master's Pedestal in the Desaguliers version. Knoop, Jones & Hamer 1943, p.130-131.
[37] Knoop, Jones & Hamer 1943, p.113.
[38] An exception to the rule is Canongate Kilwinning Lodge where the Wardens continue to sit in the west.
[39] See below, p.19.

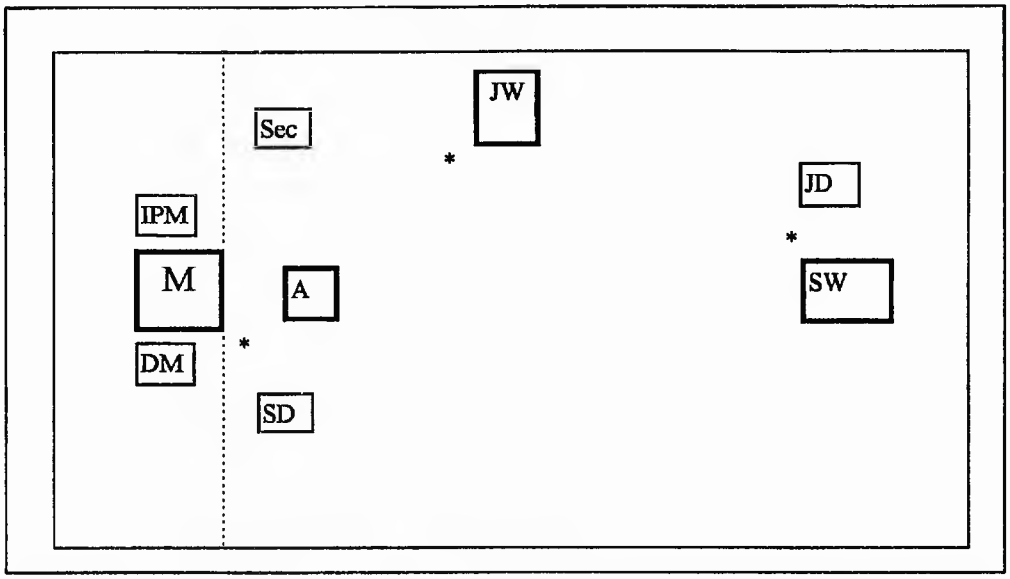

Figure 1
Typical lodge room layout showing distribution of officers and furniture.
South is to the top of the diagram.

M= Master
JW= Junior Warden
SW= Senior Warden
Sec= Secretary (typical position)
SD= Senior Deacon (if applicable)
JD= Junior Deacon (if applicable)
A= altar
IPM= Immediate Past Master
DM= Depute Master
*= typical position for candlestick or torchère
The East end of the room may be raised

inventory of the furnishings, some of which were clearly not new, on 17 December 1822 read as follows:

> The Masters Table
> Two Small Tables for the Wardens, one of them broke
> Four Tables for the Brethren, two of them needing repair
> Sixteen forms, small and great
> The Master's Chair, with the Throne [or dais].
> Two chairs for Wardens.
> A Cash Chest, and one ditto for papers and books.
> Six candlesticks...[glasses etc.]
> Three floor cloths...[40]

The Master's and Wardens' tables presumably stood in place of pedestals while the tables for dining and drinking may, even at this date, have been set up while ceremonial matters were under way. There were two chests: one for masonic paraphernalia, the other for the funds of the benefit society. Otherwise the bare minimum for respectability is achieved.

[40] Smith 1905, p.39.

THE ICONOGRAPHY OF FREEMASONRY

The material culture of freemasonry is characterised above all by the profusion of emblems applied to its objects. These were not in all cases derived from the tools of the stonemason but the most important, universal and enduring were.[41] By convention these emblems symbolise various concepts, in addition to officers of the lodge and the three degrees in craft masonry.

Defined as they are today three sets of three tools pertain to the three degrees of initiation: 24 inch gauge, gavel (or mallet) and chisel to the Entered Apprentice; square, level and plumb-rule to the Fellow Craft and skirret, pencil and compasses to the Master Mason. Those assigned to the Fellow Craft appear to be the oldest and relate to the ritual of the third degree, that of Master Mason, in which the legend of the murder of Hiram, architect of Solomon's Temple, by three apprentices, each armed with one of these implements, is told.[42] The arrangement of three emblems for each degree dates from shortly after the union of the rival English Grand Lodges in 1813 and rather forced symbolism was codified for the degrees of Entered Apprentice and Master Mason (but apparently not for the Fellow Craft). The emblems of the Entered Apprentice are said to symbolise feeling, will and intellect and those of the Master Mason vitality, activity and wisdom. Each degree represents a progression from unskilled apprentice to skilled journeyman and finally to master architect. The Fellow Craft's emblems may have been left out of this account because of their far older use as emblems of the Master (square), Senior Warden (level) and Junior Warden (plumb-rule). In Prichard's *Masonry Disected* the *Jewel* which each officer is described as wearing follows this pattern.[43]

The tools of the stonemason are given, without reference to degree or office, a great many symbolic meanings, most of which are found outside of freemasonry but some of which have come to be regarded as quintessentially masonic. The use of the word 'square', though not necessarily the image of a set square, to mean fair, honest or straight-forward certainly predates freemasonry and the use of the word to mean a rule or principle, and constancy in following it, was common during the 16th century.[44]

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[41] Diversity and eclecticism in masonic symbolism are nevertheless as old as the craft itself. The earliest known masonic symbols, used by Sir Robert Moray, include non-tool examples. See Stevenson 1984.

[42] See below, p.20.

[43] Knoop, Jones & Hamer 1943, p.113.

[44] *As the Christen religion shall be restored and reformed after the rule and square of holy scripture*, Edmund Allen, *The paraphrase or commentarie (of Leo Jude) upon the Revelation of S. John*, 1549. [Aristotle] *termeth a constant man...a square man.* George Puttenham, *The arte of English Poesie*,

Similarly it is unsurprising that the level should symbolise equality. The signification of the plumb-rule, however, *justice and uprightness of actions*, derived it is claimed from the many Biblical references to plumb lines in the context of God's judgement, is less obvious.[45] The all-seeing eye was a well established emblem of the Deity when it entered into masonic usage in the eighteenth century and is sometimes used on Master's chairs as well as in wall-paintings at the east end of a lodge well above eye level. The letter G, which *Masonry Disected* stated stood for *Geometry, or the Fifth Science*,[46] has occasionally, although clearly wrongly, been taken to stand for 'God' or the Grand Architect.

Of the less well known emblems the 24 inch gauge, taken to symbolise the 24 hours of the day and, by extension, time well spent, frequently indicates the seat or jewel of a Past Master. The common combination a semi-circular version of this tool with a square bears an uncanny resemblance to a cooper's compasses, however. The skirret is an exclusively masonic term for *an implement which acts on a centre pin, from whence a centre line is drawn, chalked and struck, to mark out the ground for the foundation of the intended structure*.[47] Rarely seen on masonic documents or objects, its use postdates the union of the English Grand Lodges in 1813. It is taken to signify an undeviating line of conduct, moral rectitude and true speech. The maul by reference to the Hiramaic legend becomes a symbol of mortality together with the universal skull and crossbones. The trowel is not taken today to have any particular meaning but played a far greater part in eighteenth century masonic art and literature and in Scotland is still the symbol of the Junior Deacon, the maul being that of the Senior Deacon. References to Deacons after the mid eighteenth century are to the two officers who act as messengers between Master and Wardens, or more generally as an extra pair of hands during the 'working' of degrees. The origin of the term is Irish but came to Scotland via England in the 1730s and 1740s.[48]

Columns are probably the most common and enduring symbol in masonic material culture after the use of tool-derived emblems and are widely encountered in furniture: on chairs, candlesticks, torchères and pedestals. The first recorded use of three of the classical Orders of Architecture for the furnishings of a masonic lodge is the purchase by the Felicity Lodge of London in 1737 of *Three Candelsticks at a cost of £4.4.0.*,

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1589. *OED*. See also, for an example illustrating the sense of honest, Shakespeare, *Anthony and Cleopatra*, II ii 190.

[45] Jones 1956, p.442. See for example Amos 7. 7-8, Isaiah 28. 16-17 or Zechariah 4. 9-10.

[46] Knoop, Jones & Hamer 1943, p.115.

[47] *Republican* 1825, quoted in *OED* under 'skirret'.

[48] Deacons were instituted at the Lodge of Holyrood House, for example, some time between 1737 and 1744. Bruce 1985, p.151.

viz., Dorick, Ionick and Corrinthian.[49] Whether or not these 'lesser lights' were placed alongside the officers of the Lodge and in which order is not recorded. From the Union of the rival English Grand Lodges in 1813, however, it was accepted that the Master was personified by the Ionic Order (signifying wisdom), the Senior Warden by the Doric (signifying strength) and the Junior Warden by the Corinthian (signifying beauty). Where the three Orders were being used in this way before 1813 the arrangement often differed. Three chairs designed by the architect John Yenn and made by William Fleming for the Shakespear [sic] Lodge in London in 1779 and distinguishable only by the gilt-brass columns on the backs might have been arranged in any of six combinations (Figure 2).[50] In 1791 the Grand Lodge of the 'Moderns'[51] declared that the *Order and Usage of the Society* was that the Grand Master was represented by the Doric Order, the Senior Warden by the Ionic and the Junior Warden by the Corinthian.[52] The use of the classical Orders could be quite vague. Of a trio of chairs made for the Britannic Lodge, London, the Master's uses the Corinthian Order and both Warden's the Ionic (Figure 3) while all three chairs of a trio made in 1784 for the Phoenix Lodge of Sunderland have Doric stiles (Figure 5).

The building of Solomon's Temple by the master craftsman Hiram-Abi was the central event in the legendary craft history of the medieval stonemasons, known today as the 'Old Charges'. Seventeenth century Scottish freemasons based their rituals, in part, on that narrative although it is far from clear how the system evolved and detail must have varied by lodge. Each of the three initiations established by 1730 nevertheless related in some way to the legends of the Temple. The 'mason word' which was given at the culmination of the apprentice's initiation was, in fact, two words in the form of question and answer: 'Jachin' and 'Boaz', the names given to the pillars which stood before the Temple.[53] Texts concerning the second degree include narrative relating how Hiram's journeymen ascend a winding stair to the 'Middle Chamber' of the Temple where they are paid.[54] Finally, during the Master Mason's ritual, the murder of Hiram and the raising of his corpse might be acted out. This part of the legend is necromantic in origin although the idea of resurrection or spiritual rebirth as a member of the brotherhood was what made it relevant to freemasons. The journeymen faithful

[49] Rose 1949. p.228.
[50] Discussed in Graham 1994, p.70. Both Yenn and Fleming were members of the Lodge.
[51] Their rivals were the 'Antients' or Atholl Grand Lodge, established in 1751 and associated in particular with Irish freemasonry. It was the Atholl Grand Lodge which derogatorily termed the Grand Lodge established in London in 1717 as the 'Moderns'.
[52] Such were the instructions given for the making of the Grand Lodge thrones discussed below, p.26. Minute book quoted by Hewitt 1967, p.136.
[53] The earliest evidence for this dates from 1692. In one manuscript at Trinity College, Dublin, Boaz is the word of the Apprentice, Jachin of the Fellow Craft. Stevenson 1988b, pp.133 & 149. Biblical scholars today generally transliterate the name of Solomon's architect 'Huram-Abi'.
[54] See I Kings 6: 8-4 for the stair and chamber.

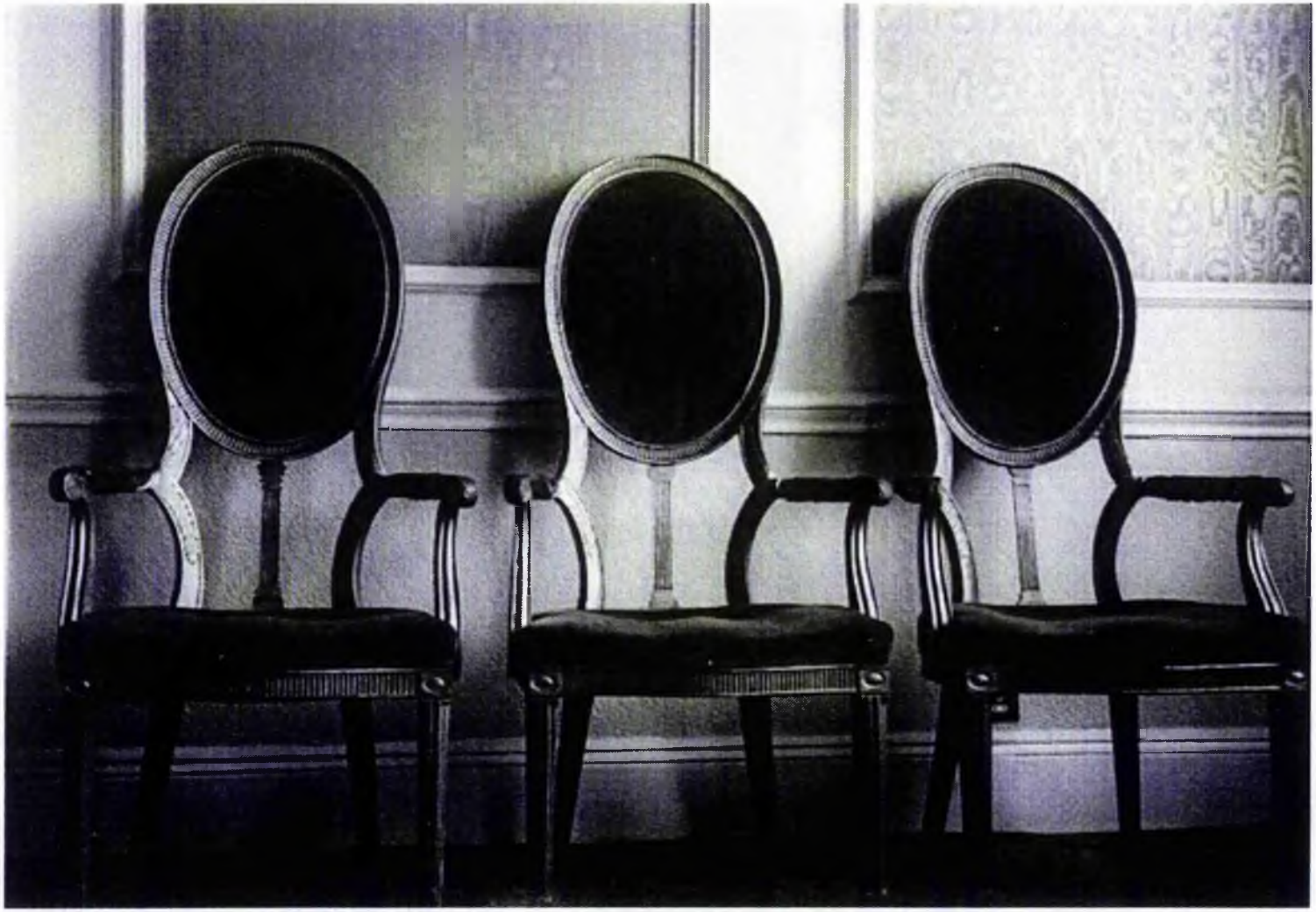

Figure 2

John Yenn and William Fleming
Officers' chairs, Shakespear Lodge, London, 1779.
(Graham 1994)

Figure 3

Officers' chairs, footstools and Master's pedestal,
Britannic Lodge, London, *c.*1760.
Freemasons' Hall, London.
(Jones 1956)

Figure 4

Master's chair, Britannic Lodge, London, *c.*1760.
Freemasons' Hall, London.
(Joy 1965)

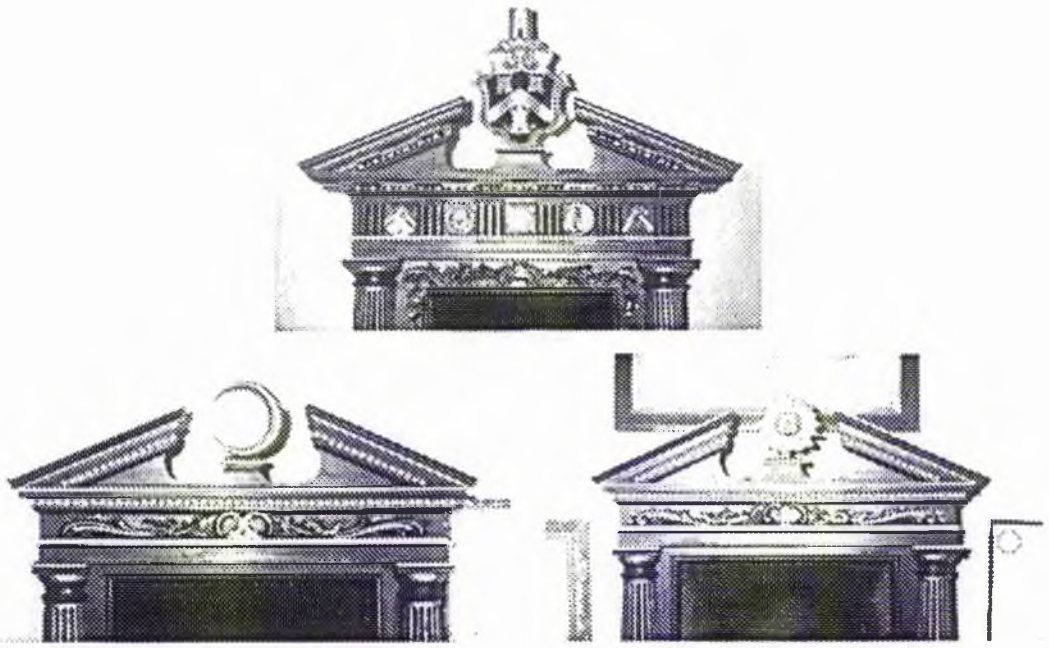

Figure 5

Officers' chairs, Phoenix Lodge,
Sunderland, 1784. Detail.
(Cyer 1989a)

to Hiram search for his corpse in order to recover the 'word'. Since it has died with him they agree that the name of the first thing encountered will in future stand in place of the word.[55] This was the word between Master Masons and appears as Maha-byn in the earliest manuscripts.[56] Shaw and his colleagues, under the influence of Rosicrucian practice, may have been the first to transfer this element from the Old Charges to initiations.

During the conferring of degrees, therefore, the lodge space metaphorically becomes the Temple. An early Scottish exposure makes this clear:

> Q: How stands your lodge?
> A: East and West as the Temple of Jerusalem.
> Q: Where was the first lodge?
> A: In the porch of Solomon's Temple.[57]

The two pillars is a central motif in masonic material culture. Representations of Jachin and Boaz are frequently encountered at or just inside the entrance to lodge rooms in England, although rarely in Scotland. Two pillars, Figure 30, made in Bath and of brass like their Biblical models, follow the description in II Chronicles 4.12 which refers to the *network decorating the two bowl-shaped capitals*.[58] The idea of the Temple as a repository of wisdom, and Jachin and Boaz as literal repositories for mystical texts, encouraged a fascination for both on the part of Renaissance scholars such as Villalpando and this concern was taken into freemasonry.[59]

Where columns are clearly not to be read as emblems of office they will probably represent Jachin and Boaz. This is particularly likely to be the case where globes, with or without tripods, are placed above the capitals. From the mid-sixteenth century, woodcut illustrations to the Bible, especially in 'Geneva' editions, depict Jachin and

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[55] The legend was current elsewhere during the middle ages, sometimes cast with Noah and his sons.

[56] That the meaning of the word had been lost by the early eighteenth century is demonstrated by the many variants in exposures which either misspell it, attempt to render it as an English word or phrase, confuse it with the word Boaz, or spuriously hebraicise it. Unfortunately it is not clear to anyone today what the word meant. Stevenson 1988b, pp.125-152.

[57] *Some Questiones Anent the Mason Word 1696*, quoted in Stevenson 1988b, p.139.

[58] Of the descriptions in I Kings and II Chronicles, the text of the latter is less confused.

[59] This idea arose from a conflation of the Temple pillars with the two pillars associated with the flood. See Stevenson 1988b, p.146. A brief account of attempts to reconstruct the Temple on paper using the descriptions in I Kings 7, II Chronicles 2-4 and Ezekial 40-42 is given in Curl 1991, pp.80-94. A close study of del Prado and Villalpando's *Templi Hierosolymitani* of 1596-1604 is contained within Taylor 1972. Rosenau 1979, pp.93-4, describes how early seventeenth century French Protestants and Dutch Jews built churches and synagogues designed with reference to the Biblical Temple(s).

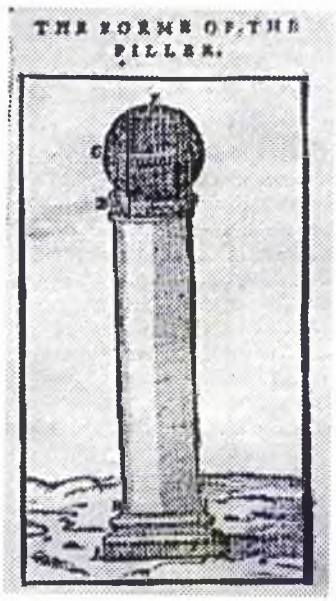

Figure 6

THE FORME OF THE PILLER
Woodcut, 100mm x 55mm.
Bible printed in Edinburgh in 1579 by
Alexander Arbuthnot, I Kings 7 (p.161).
St Andrews University Library.

Boaz with spherical *chapiters* (Figure 6).[60] Old Geneva Bibles were frequently gifted to lodges by their members, probably because of the well-known woodcuts, and illustrations of Jachin and Boaz with globes become common in masonic printed ephemera during the last quarter of the eighteenth century.[61] The globes were often taken to illustrate the notion of 'masonry universal', a phrase suggesting a world-wide movement offering knowledge of both heaven and earth and first encountered in the pamphlet *Three Distinct Knocks* (1760). Several English lodges purchased library globes.[62]

A last important group of emblems is the sun, moon and stars (usually seven), the masonic significance of which is twofold.[63] Early exposures relate this trio to the 'lesser lights', the candles placed in the east, south and west, and by extension to the three primary officers. Additionally, however, the place of each officer within the lodge room in relation to the points of the compass and the passage of the sun during the day may be represented by the rising, meridian and setting sun and images of these can be found on chairs and pedestals as well as on the appropriate wall or coving. A variation on this is for the Senior Warden in the west to be represented by the moon, the sun taken as having set. A set of chairs at St Matthew's Lodge, Barton-on-Humber (Figure 7) conform to the rising, noon-day, setting pattern while those at the Phoenix Lodge of Sunderland (Figure 5) give to the Senior Warden a crescent moon (the Master is represented by the mason's arms). Stars also frequently appear today on blue painted lodge room ceilings, a representation of the canopy of the heavens. Whether this was practised during the eighteenth century is unclear.

A third set of chairs made by Wright and Elwick in 1768 for the Lodge at Wakefield (Figure 8) use a crescent moon for the Senior Warden's chair together with a beehive and bees for the Master's chair. This emblem, the beehive, is also frequently encountered in masonic material culture and may be read in several ways. There can be no doubt that for many freemasons it symbolised industry and harmony, as it does today, the hive likened to a building, lodge and even the Temple or Ark of the

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[60] The cut in Figure 6 derives ultimately from François Vatable's *In Ezechielem explicationes et apparatus urbis ac templi Hierosolymitani commentariis et imaginibus illustratus,* ?Paris, before 1547. See Rosenau 1979, p.91.

[61] See Beresiner 1989. The well-known engraving of 1736 in Picard's *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses de tous les peuples du monde* depicting 'English Freemasons' includes a Master's chair to the top of which a globe is attached. The accuracy of this illustration should not be relied upon, however.

[62] An example being the Grenadiers Lodge which did so in 1792 at a cost of £3 3s. Rose 1949, p.231.

[63] This trio of symbols signifying the nine planets of the pre-Copernican cosmos may have entered into freemasonry from alchemical sources and certainly does not appear to have held any significance for seventeenth century masons. Both Solomon and St John the Evangelist, the patron saint of stonemasons, were claimed by alchemists as practitioners of that art. See Roberts 1994, p.16.

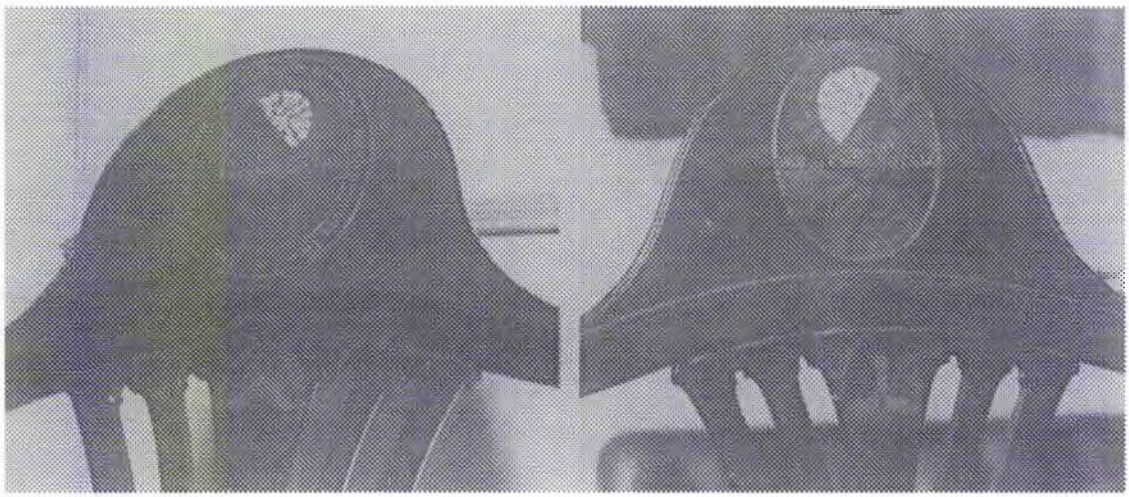

Figure 7

Officers' chairs, St Matthew's Lodge,
Barton-on-Humber. Detail.
(Cryer 1989a)

Figure 8

Richard Wright & Edward Elwick.
Junior Warden's chair, Unanimity Lodge,
Wakefield, 1768.
(Gilbert 1976)

Covenant. This Mandevillian meaning is present in a verse which preceded the regulations of the Perth Masonic Friendly Society, printed in 1804:

> Let us, like th'industrious bee,
> In summer-time provide
> Our little stores for winter storms,
> And in our Box it hide[64]

In ancient and medieval literature, however, the beehive was a metaphor for the mind or memory, stored with the honey of learning. If this meaning still held, for some, in the eighteenth century the hive and its bees can be seen as an appropriate emblem for the Master, one of whose attributes is supposedly wisdom.[65] Rose notes the first use of the beehive emblem in a masonic context on a London lodge summons card from about 1750 and its popularity was later widespread, Fortitude Lodge of Lancaster having a small model of a beehive made in wood in 1795.[66]

A summary of the symbols available to Scottish freemasons in the second half of the eighteenth century is contained within the oil-painted linen 'tracing board' kept at Kirkwall Kilwinning Lodge. (Figure 9.) The *horror vacui* and desire to include every variation on a theme are characteristic of certain forms of 'folk art'. The winged cherubs, the supporters of the arms of the English Grand Lodge of Antients, are evidence of receptivity to English masonic print. (Little material of a masonic nature was printed in Scotland before the nineteenth century.) The religious preoccupations of eighteenth century Scottish freemasonry are evidenced by the encoded texts upon the altars: respectively, a garbled text from the Song of Songs and chapter-and-verse references to other Biblical passages.[67]

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[64] Smith 1898, p.156.
[65] See Carruthers 1990, especially pp.33-45.
[66] Rose 1949, p.231.
[67] Craven & Speth 1897.

Figure 9

'Kirkwall Scroll' (detail), Lodge Kirkwall Kilwinning, Kirkwall, second half of the 18th century. Oil on linen. Entire cloth 564cm x 168cm. (Craven & Speth 1897)

CHAPTER 3

POTENTIAL INFLUENCES: ENGLISH MASONIC FURNITURE AND THE SCOTTISH TRADE INCORPORATION DEACON'S CHAIR

Although few of the many surviving eighteenth century English masonic chairs are fully documented, some have attracted the attention of furniture historians and provide important comparisons with Scottish material.[68] The following selection is not comprehensive (and approximately half were made in London) but seeks to illustrate the range and diversity as well as to identify common characteristics. Many of the decorative themes introduced here made their first appearance in England, coming to Scotland only thereafter. Scottish freemasonry was not only under the influence of English freemasonry, however, sharing to some extent in the culture of the trade incorporation. Consequently the Scottish trade incorporation Deacon's chair is also briefly surveyed.

Perhaps the first masonic furniture in to be made in England was the trio of chairs purchased by the Old Dundee Lodge of London in 1741.[69] The Master's chair cost £18 18s. and the two Wardens' chairs came to £21 but none of the three are known to have survived. Another set of chairs formerly belonging to the South Middlesex Lodge (Figure 10) are dated to around 1730 by Clare Graham although a date in the 1740s is equally likely.[70] They may be compared with a more advanced, splat-backed trio from Exeter in Figure 11. There is an inscription under the Master's chair of this set: *Daniel Simpson, sculpsit, 1769.*[71] Flamboyantly rococo they are considerably more ornate than the South Middlesex chairs and employ a greater number of emblematic details. The arms of the Master's chair are supported by uprights in the form of Doric columns entwined with vine leaves which, if James Stevens Curl's conjecture is correct, would have held masonic significance at the time they were made.[72] The top rail of the Senior Warden's chair is incised with lines representing

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[68] Graham 1994 is valuable together with Joy 1965. Cryer 1989 is not a work of scholarship but suggests many rewarding lines of enquiry.

[69] Rose 1949, p.220.

[70] Graham 1994, p.112.

[71] Hope 1893. Simpson does not appear in *DEFM*.

[72] See Curl 1991, p.103 and plates 64, 65, 121, 125 and IV. Twisted columns were associated with the Temple in Jerusalem from at least 1470 when the illuminator Jean Foucquet depicted the sacking of the Temple by the Romans. Rosenau 1979, p.84. Curls examples are either French or Austrian but the Corinthian canopy built in 1820 to cover the royal throne in the House of Lords, and designed by the freemason John Soane for the freemason George IV, also employed helical foliage. Graham 1994, Figure 66. Finally see Figure 9 above.

Figure 10
Officers' chairs, South Middlesex Lodge, *c.* 1730. Victoria and Albert Museum.
(Graham 1994)

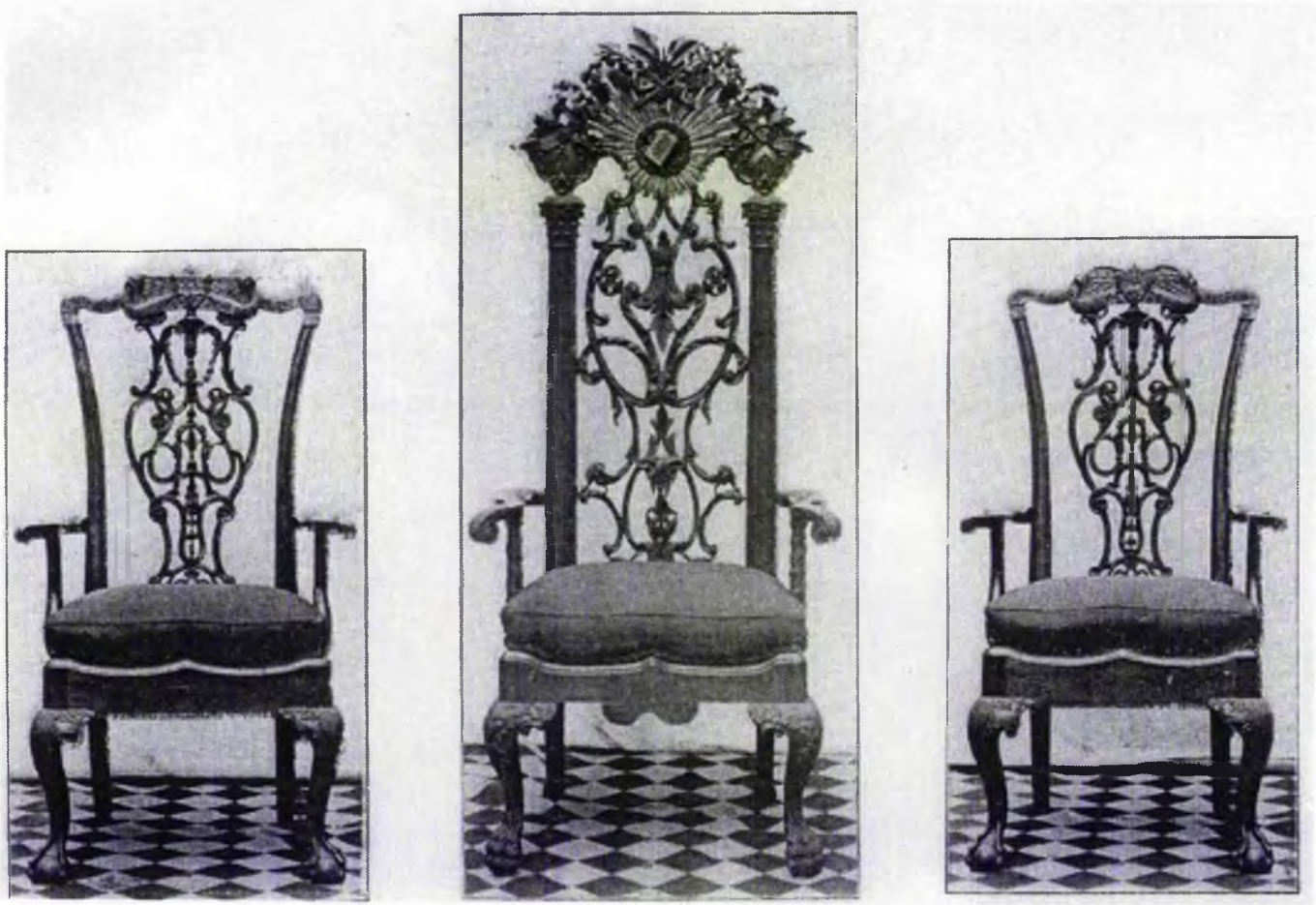

Figure 11

Daniel Simpson
Officers' chairs, Freemasons' Hall, Exeter, 1769.
(Hope 1893)

rough ashlar masonry, on the Junior Warden's chair both rough and smooth ashlar, motifs applied with care and appropriate to each officer.[73] Across the top of each chair is wound an inscription taken from the works of Horace.

Edward Joy discusses several chairs made in London dating from the 1760s including that in Figure 12, the central back splat of which is taken from a design in Plate XI of the third edition of Chippendale's *Director*. The trio of chairs belonging to the Britannic Lodge, Figure 3, are of a particularly vast size, the solid upholstered back adding to the throne-like quality. Gilt carvings of the sun, moon and seven stars protrude from the top of the Master's chair. (Figure 4.) The fashionable blind fretwork and rococo carving are juxtaposed with classical columns as in the pilasters of the Master's chair from Exeter and that in Figure 12.

The Master's chair made in 1789 and subsequently acquired second-hand by the Lodge of Unanimity and Sincerity, Taunton, Figure 14, may have been the first to employ globes as stile finials although the inclusion of celestial and terrestrial globes in Robert Kennett's Grand Master's Throne of 1791 probably led to their use on a wide scale thereafter. The Taunton chair was also unusual in that its columnar stiles were carved in the round. Ball finials on a masonic chair should perhaps be taken metaphorically for celestial and terrestrial globes as in the case of Figure 15 made in 1814 by John Connop for the Old Union Lodge, London, or Figure 16 made for the Queen's Head Lodge, probably around 1770.[74] The crocodile motif on the former represents the Deity, a literary allusion to Plutarch's description of the transparent membrane over its eyes *by reason of which it sees and is not seen, as God sees all, Himself not being seen.*[75]

It is notable that several of these columned chairs also include stylobate, entablature and pediment and that the detailing is as accurate as the capitals of the columns. The column shafts in the case of the Britannic Master's chair, for example, are reeded in the lower third, fluted above. Architectural precision in joinery and cabinet-making was not unusual, of course. The Bishop's chair in St Paul's Cathedral, probably made between 1697 and 1699 by John Bernard, displays this use of both reeding and fluting.[76] Any furniture maker could turn to an architectural treatise for information on the arrangement of the classical orders and after 1754 these were available in Chippendale's *Director*. Bookcases and break-front bureaux were given pilasters and

[73] In relation to the rough and smooth ashlar Jones 1956 comments on the passage from the natural, uneducated man to the cultured man, aware of his duty to society.
[74] Discussed in Joy 1965.
[75] Graham 1988.
[76] Graham 1994, fig.35 & p.27.

Figure 12

Master's chair, *c.*1765.
Freemasons' Hall, London
(Joy 1965)

Figure 13

J White. Master's chair, Lodge of Unanimity and Sincerity, Taunton. 1807. (Jones 1956)

Figure 14

Master's chair, Lodge of Unanimity and Sincerity, Taunton, 1789. (Jones 1956)

Figure 15

John Connop.
Master's chair, Old Union Lodge, London,
1814. Victoria and Albert Museum.
(Graham 1994)

Figure 16

Master's chair, Queen's Head Lodge, London, *c.* 1770.
Freemasons' Hall, London.
(Joy 1965)

pediments throughout the eighteenth century. Chairs, however, Palladian or neo-classical did not commonly employ the Orders of Architecture while it would have been particularly important to freemasons that the Orders used in their furnishings were accurate. Exceptionally, the set of chairs made for the lodge in Wakefield are of a gothic character as well as being the earliest surviving English masonic chairs for which firm documentary evidence has been published.[77] Made by Wright and Elwick for £8 9s. 6d. in 1768, the chairs discretely represent each occupant symbolically in small painted glass medallions.

In 1791 Robert Kennett, a fashionable London cabinet-maker, made a trio of chairs for the Grand Lodge of the 'Moderns' which were to have a considerable influence (Figure 17). The commission arose *on account of the high honour the Society now enjoys of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales being Grand Master.*[78] Designs and estimates were procured and Kennett having won the contest that resulted had, as a non-freemason, to be briefed on masonic ornament. The Prince of Wales' plume of three ostrich feathers encircled by his coronet capped the Grand Master's throne (Figure 18).[79] Equally appropriately all three chairs were made in the Louis XVI style that the Prince favoured at this date. They cost the Grand Lodge the considerable sum of £157 10s.[80] and were put on public display in Kennett's Bond Street showroom.

Ostrich feathers, celebrating the Prince's tenure of the Grand Mastership, form part of a formula that Christopher Gilbert has identified as a north-west regional type.[81] Three similar sets, with delicately carved backs and painted panels, are known and a fourth would appear to relate to them. Two appearing to date from the early 1790s are now in the collection at Freemasons' Hall in London. Both would appear to have a north-west provenance and the two are very close in appearance, although the painted panels differ.[82] (Figure 19.) The third set were made for the Minerva Lodge, Ashton-under-Lyne, in 1807, almost certainly in imitation of the earlier sets: the accounts of the

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[77] See Gilbert 1976.

[78] Minutes of Grand Lodge quoted in Hewitt 1967, p.136. The Prince of Wales held that office between 1790 and 1813.

[79] These were replaced in 1901 with the present coronet when the Duke of Connaught became Grand Master. The back upholstery has also been replaced.

[80] The fullest account of the making of the chairs is in Hewitt 1967, pp136-9. An extra £8 was paid for footstools, 5 guineas for a dais that was not used and £21 2s. 3d. for packing cases.

[81] Gilbert 1994.

[82] One set lacks the Senior Warden's chair. The two remaining chairs of this set are illustrated in Simon 1905 and discussed in Joy 1965. The second set, believed to have come from Cheshire, were purchased through Sotheby's in 1964 are discussed in Hewitt 1967. In 1899 a dealer was in possession of what were probably the two chairs in Simon 1905. The drawing of one, the Master's chair, in *The Cabinet Maker*, however, is either inaccurate or points to the existence of yet more chairs on this pattern. The correspondent wrote from Lower Broughton, a Salford parish. See *The Cabinet Maker*, October 1899, p.111.

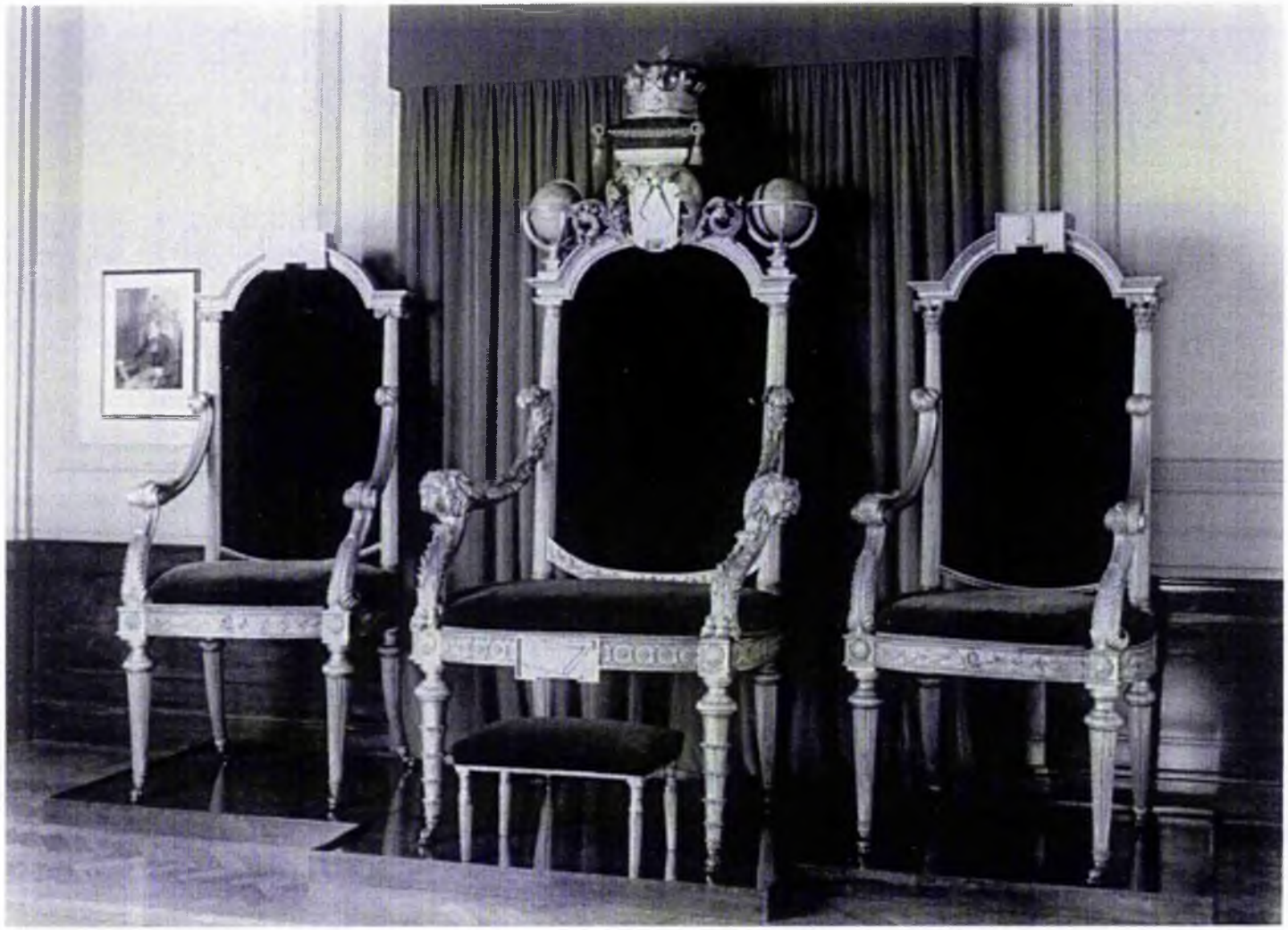

Figure 17
Robert Kennet
Grand Master's and Grand Wardens' chairs, 1791. Freemason's Hall, London.
(Graham 1994)

Figure 18

Lithograph after a painting of 1833 by
John Harris showing the Duke of Sussex, Grand
Master 1813-1843, seated in the Grand Master's
chair at Freemasons' Hall in London.
(Graham 1994)

Figure 19

Master's chair, *c.*1790.
Freemason's Hall, London.
(Joy 1965)

Figure 20

William Walker
Senior Warden's chair, Minerva Lodge, Ashton-under-Lyne, 1807.
(Gilbert 1994)

Figure 21

Master's chair, Lodge of Lights,
Warrington, *c.*1765.
(Cryer 1989a)

Lodge record travel *expenses on inspecting furniture at different Lodges.* (Figure 20.) Given the similarities between the Minerva trio and the other chairs it would seem likely that the maker, William Walker, did the 'inspecting' and was a member of the Lodge. All three Master's chairs have a beehive carved upon the top rail, the same emblem used in the Wakefield Master's chair. The fourth set, Figure 21, made for the Lodge of Lights, Warrington, are earlier (*c.*1765) and the fret-cut pierced backs are not enriched with carved detail. The similarity of concept, including painted panels, however, suggests a source for the chairs of the 1790s.[83] Another case of a chair modelled upon an existing example is illustrated in Figure 13, made for the Lodge of Unanimity and Sincerity, in the same year, 1807, that the chair in Figure 14 was purchased second-hand. The resemblance is by no means exact but the influence can, nevertheless, be felt.[84] Graham alerts us to the market in second-hand masonic wares: as early as 1744 *an extraordinarily good Free-Mason's Chair* was advertised in a London newspaper.[85]

Canopies of upholstery, joinery or a combination of both were often found over the Master's chair. The first recorded by Rose cost the Grenadiers Lodge £6 10s. 4d. in 1788.[86] An earlier example, however, if we include integral canopies, covers a Master's chair made for Coventry's Trinity Lodge after 1755. (Figure 22.) Carried at the front by two Doric columns, and supported on a Doric entablature, the segmental pediment is embellished with small statuettes, a feature which would be characteristic of the 1750s and 1760s. The Wardens' chairs which accompany this piece were obtained only in 1834 *the better to correspond with the Master's.*[87] That these are made of oak and the Master's chair of mahogany suggests that they were perhaps not made at this time but purchased second-hand. A later example of the integral canopy form, made in the early 19th century comes from Whitehaven.[88] Four columns support two semi-circular arches, the radiant sun arising above the rear arch. The canopy, including the sunburst motif, resembles the pedimented doorways which are a common feature of the local vernacular architecture.[89]

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[83] Cryer 1989a, p.113. The mason's arms appear again on the Master's chair together with panels depicting sun and moon.
[84] The new chair was the work of J. White, possibly the James White of the High Street, cabinet-maker and upholsterer, listed in trade directories between 1822 and 1830. *DEFM.*
[85] Graham 1994, p.65.
[86] Rose 1949, p.230.
[87] Minute book entry for 6 October 1834. I am indebted to Walter Hope for this information. There is no mention of the Master's chair until it was repaired in 1807 at a cost of £3 3s., suggesting that it is contemporaneous with the foundation of the Lodge in December 1755.
[88] See Cryer 1989a, p.126.
[89] This was suggested to me by David Jones. See Pevsner 1967, p.206.

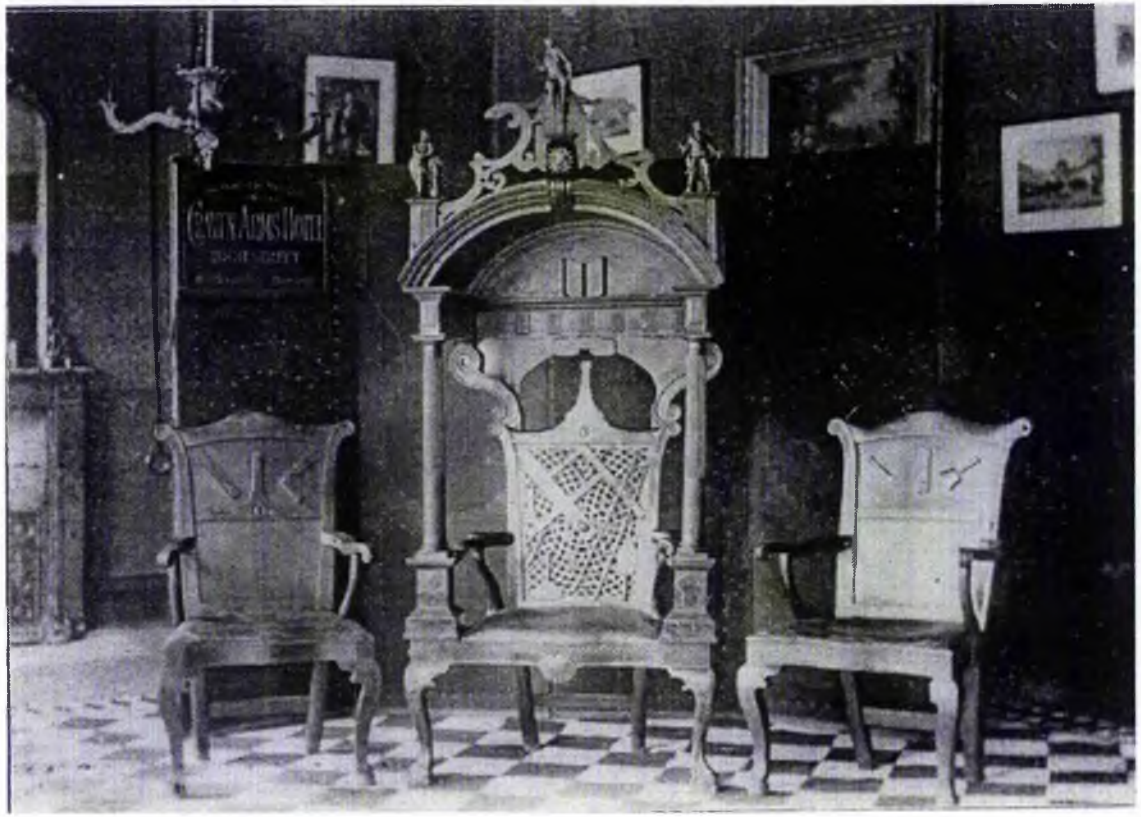

Figure 22

Master's chair, *c.* 1760 and Wardens' chairs, ?1834.
(Lamonby 1893)

An impressive collection of furniture belonged to the Lodge Loyal, Barnstaple, Devon.[90] Unfortunately the documentary evidence for the precise origins of most of the pieces in it is poor and the article by Oliver in the Transactions of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge of Research for 1944 offers conjectures which are unreliable. Certainly the Lodge Loyal purchased the contents of the Masonic Hall, York Street, Bath in 1843 for 100 guineas following the sale of the Hall itself the previous year. It had been built by three Bath Lodges, the Royal Cumberland, the Royal York and the Lodge of Virtue in 1818 at a cost of £3,000, the burden of this debt eventually forcing the sale.[91] The Hall had, interestingly, been open to the public for the two days prior to its consecration by the Duke of Sussex and the *Bath Herald* reported that *upwards of 2,000 persons (chiefly ladies) paid for admission to view the masonic paraphernalia which was displayed in due form in the hall.*

Of the four lodges involved only Royal Cumberland and Lodge Loyal have records concerning the purchase of furniture before 1843 and it is difficult to match these with the pieces which still exist.[92] The Royal Cumberland purchased a Master's chair from a cabinetmaker and member of the Lodge, Mr Davis, for six guineas in 1768.[93] It was repaired by another cabinetmaker and member, Mr Birchall, in 1786. Oliver argues that this is the chair illustrated in Figure 24 yet that chair could equally well be the Master's chair made for the Lodge Loyal in 1821 by George Hearson for £8 18s. 11d. and given Corinthian capitals and gilt orbs in 1829.[94] Moreover the armchair of around 1765 recently sold by Sotheby's[95], Figure 25, is a more likely candidate for the position of the chair made by Davis. It was decided in 1788 that *an addition be made to the Master's Chair with the Master's Emblem, under the inspection of Bro. Birchall* whereas the chair sold at Sotheby's bears no emblems at all. Oliver does not record, however, that Birchall was ever paid for adding the *Master's Emblem*, as he was for the previous repairs and it may be that this plan was not carried out. Royal Cumberland also purchased from Birchall in 1788 *two neat Arm Chairs covered in red damask* for its Wardens. These might well be the other two chairs sold by Sotheby's, Figure 26, which resemble a design in plate XIII of Hepplewhite's *The Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Guide* of 1788.

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[90] Several pieces were auctioned at Sotheby's in February 1995.
[91] For a mere £1,300. See Oliver 1944.
[92] Matters are complicated by the fact that some of the furniture was passed on to Lodge Benevolence, Bideford.
[93] Oliver 1944, p.121.
[94] Oliver 1944, p.123. Although Hearson's work might equally be the chair in Figure 23.
[95] Sotheby's 1995, lots 61, 62 & 127.

Figure 23
Junior Warden's chair, Lodge Loyal, Barnstaple.
(Oliver 1944)

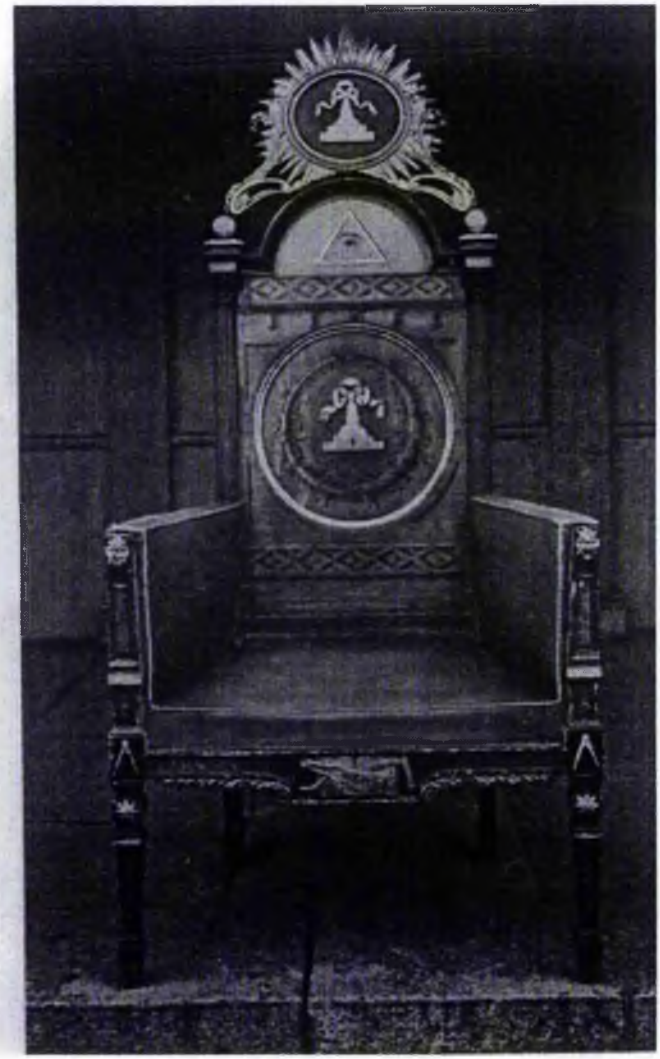

Figure 24
Senior Warden's chair, Lodge Loyal, Barnstaple.
(Oliver 1944)

Figure 25

Master's chair, *c.*1765.
(Sotheby's 1995)

Figure 26

Wardens' chairs, *c.*1790.
(Sotheby's 1995)

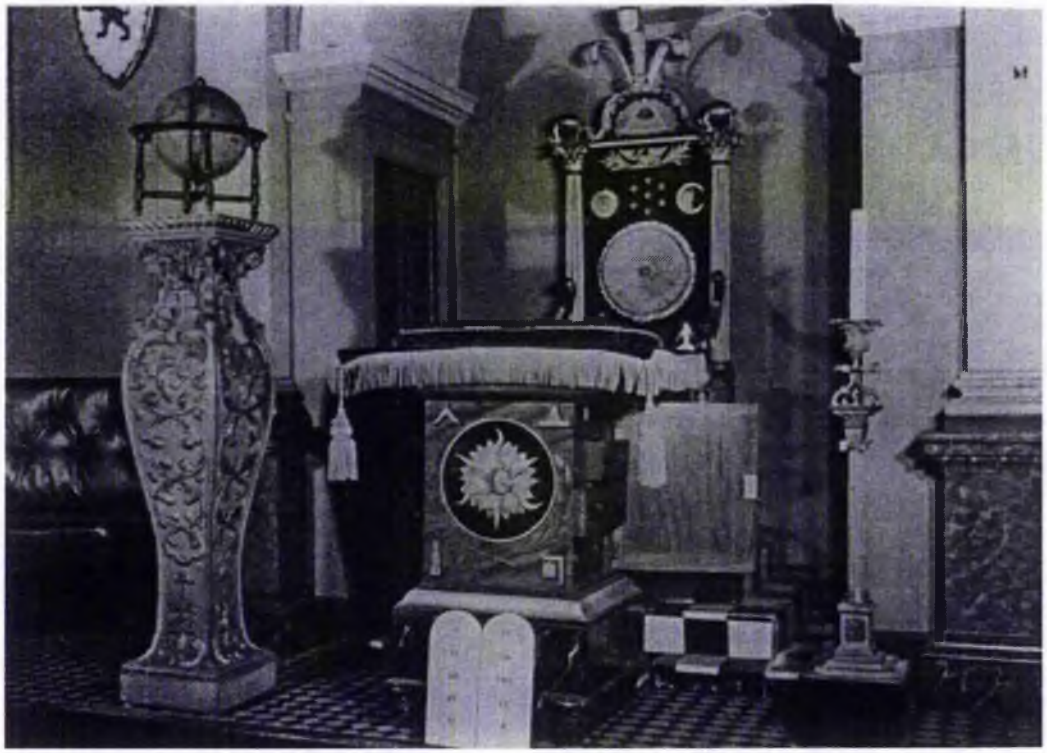

Figure 27

'Bath Furniture' at Lodge Loyal, Barnstaple.
(Oliver 1944)

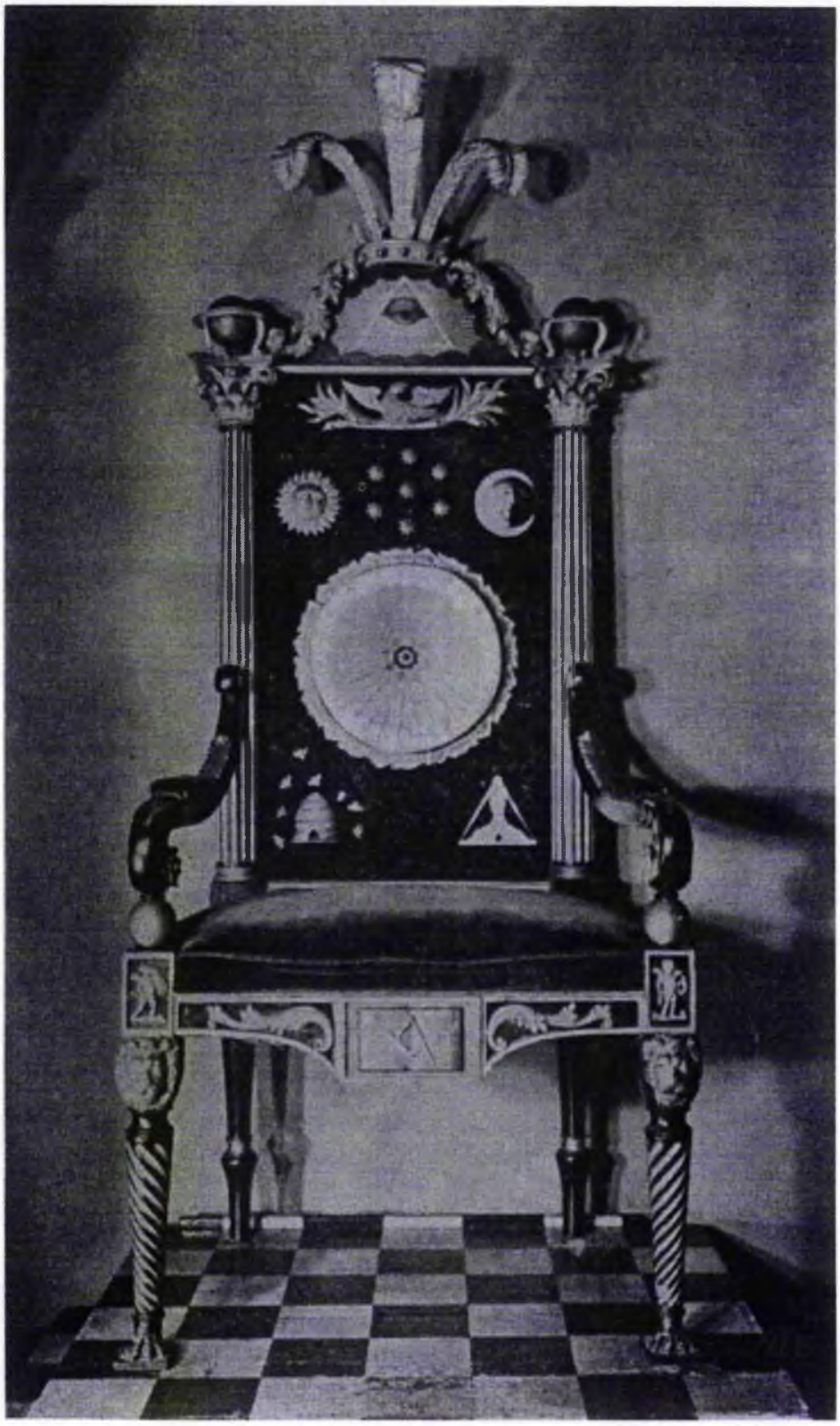

Figure 28

Master's chair, *c.*1800.
(Oliver 1944)

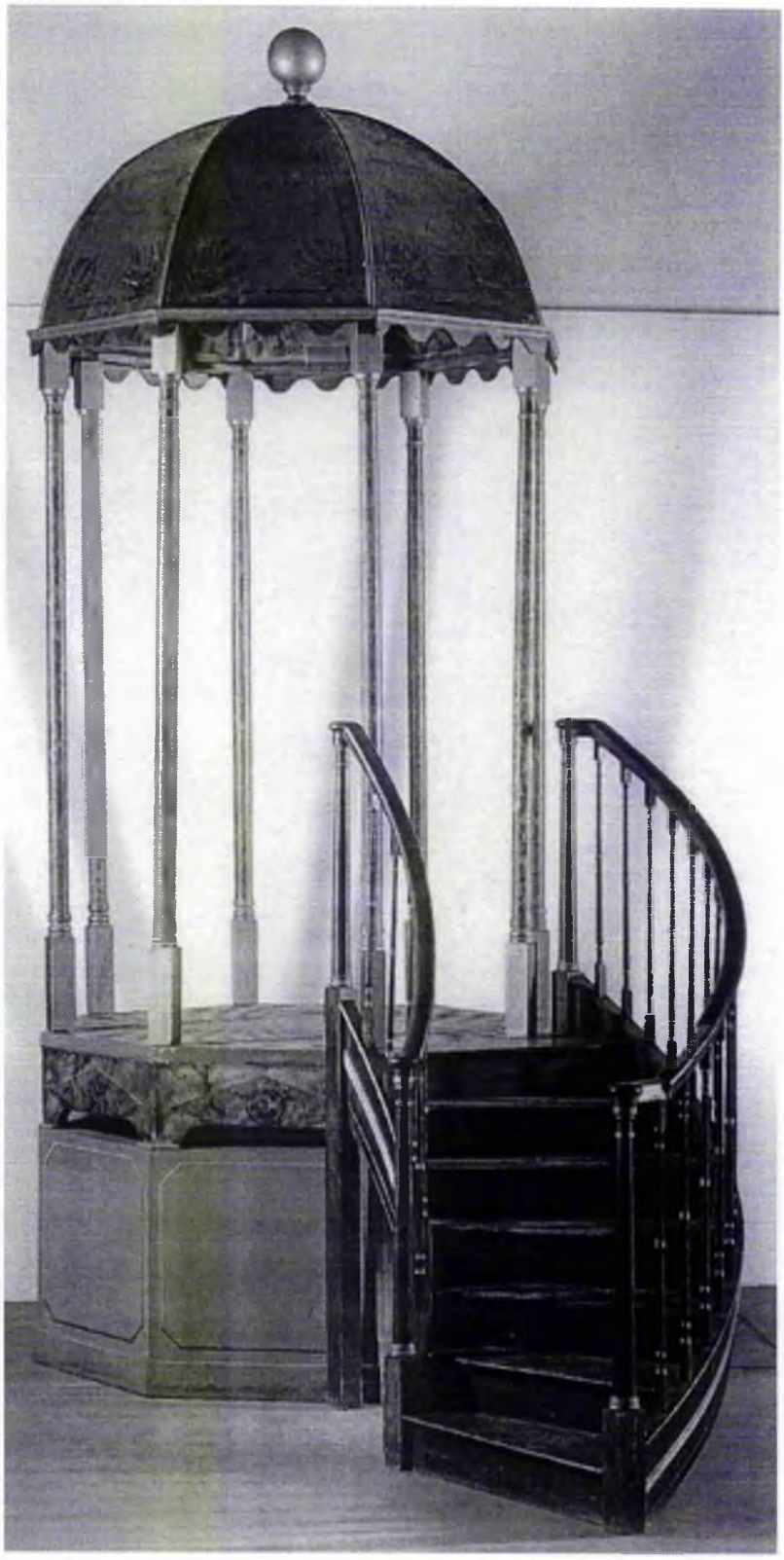

Figure 29

'Middle Chamber and Winding Staircase'
*c.*1800.
(Sotheby's 1995)

Figure 30

Lodge Loyal, Barnstaple, showing brass pillars in foreground.
(Oliver 1944)

Nothing, however, can be said with certainty concerning this furniture other than that some of it was of a notably ostentatious character. (Figure 27.) The three brass torchères were made with such care as to vary in height according to the classical Order used. The painted Master's pedestal is made of mahogany while the Master's chair, Figure 28, and the pair of rococo pillars employ composition in the ornamentation. The chair displays similarities with Sheraton's Grand Master's chair,[96] Figure 33, including the 'sun' of orange silk in the centre of the back and the configuration of four emblems around it. The wood is painted black and gilt compo applied over it, the seat and padded arms are of crimson silk and the back of cut glass covered with black velvet. A Phoenix rests on flames and acacia, both symbolising immortality.[97] The capitals are Corinthian and the globes above set within tripods. Unique among existing masonic furniture are the middle chamber and winding staircase, Figure 29. The roof of the octagonal cupola is of painted canvas and the black and white chequered floor has a brass hexagram enclosing the letter G inlaid into it which is repeated in the ceiling. The seven treads of the staircase are inset with the brass letters *G R L A G M A* standing for the seven liberal arts. Here was at least one lodge where the furnishings were unambiguously part of the ceremony, namely the Fellow Craft degree.

Designs for English masonic furniture are extremely rare. In a design by Matthias Lock from about 1740 masonic emblems are grafted onto an imposing but otherwise conventionally fashionable arm chair reminiscent of the large Master's chair made in the early 1760s for the Strong Man Lodge of London (Figures 31 and 32). Designs by the London cabinet-maker George Speer, probably drawn in 1791 to attract the commission from the Grand Lodge which was eventually given to Kennett, include several architectonic forms combined with unfashionable mid-century detailing and resemble the Britannic Lodge trio, pieces he possibly knew having been initiated into the Burning Bush Lodge in 1779.[98] The design for a candlestand based upon the Doric order in Ince and Mayhew's *Universal System* of 1762 recalls Speer's explicitly masonic drawing of around 1791 and could conceivably have been a subtle advertisement to masonic customers.

One of two designs published by Thomas Sheraton in the *Cabinet Dictionary* of 1802-3 bears a certain resemblance to the Master's chair at Freemasons' Hall, Bristol,

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[96] See below, p.30.

[97] They are also emblems of resurrection and point to the third degree in which the candidate is raised from the dead, the ultimate rite of passage, a ritual which takes place to the narrative of the discovery of Hiram-Abi's corpse and the discovery/giving of the Master Mason's word.

[98] Coleridge 1970.

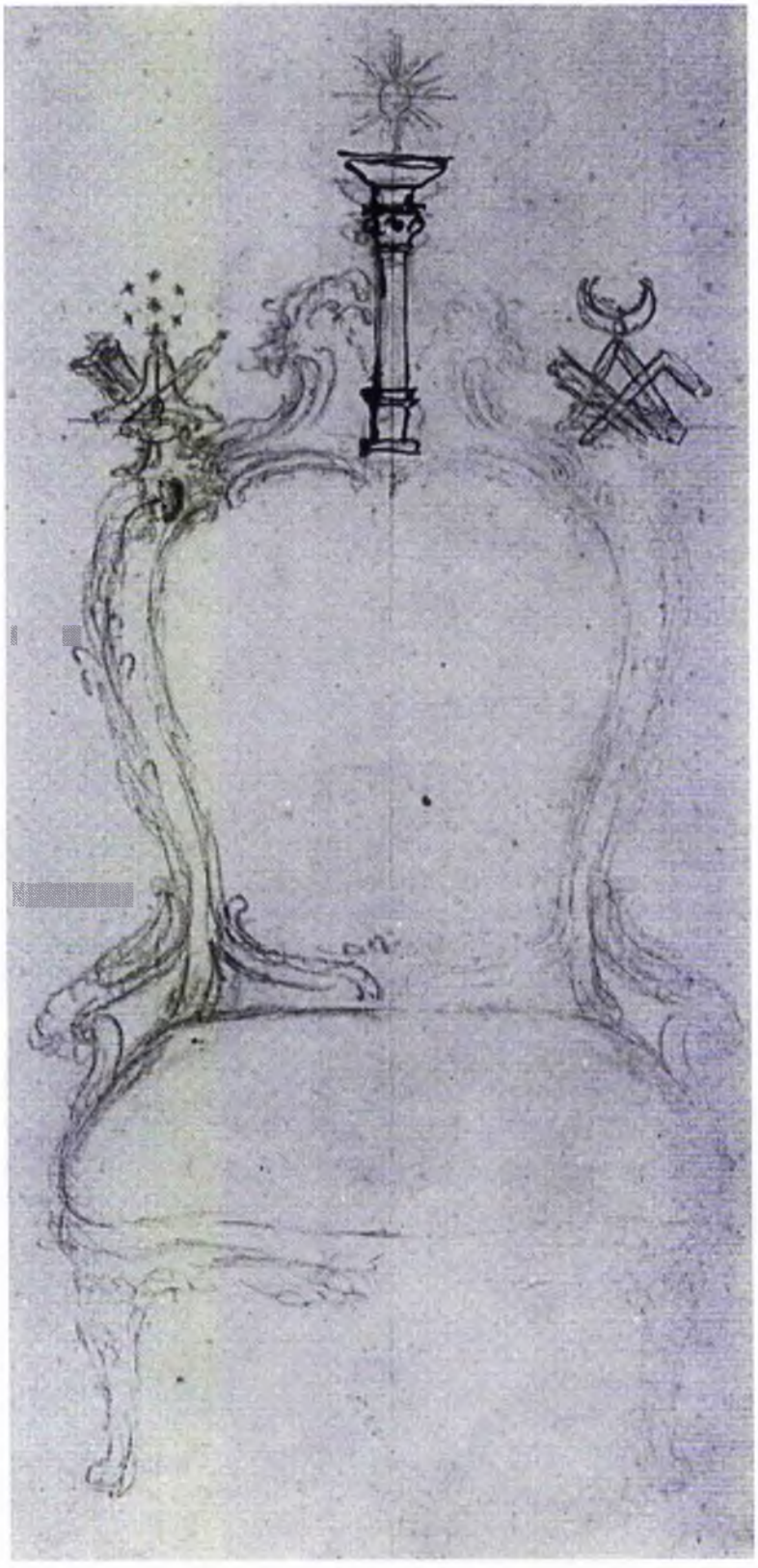

Figure 31
Matthias Lock
Design for a Master's chair, *c.* 1740. Victoria and Albert Museum.
(Graham 1994)

Figure 32

Master's chair, Strong Man Lodge,
London, *c.*1760.
(Joy 1965)

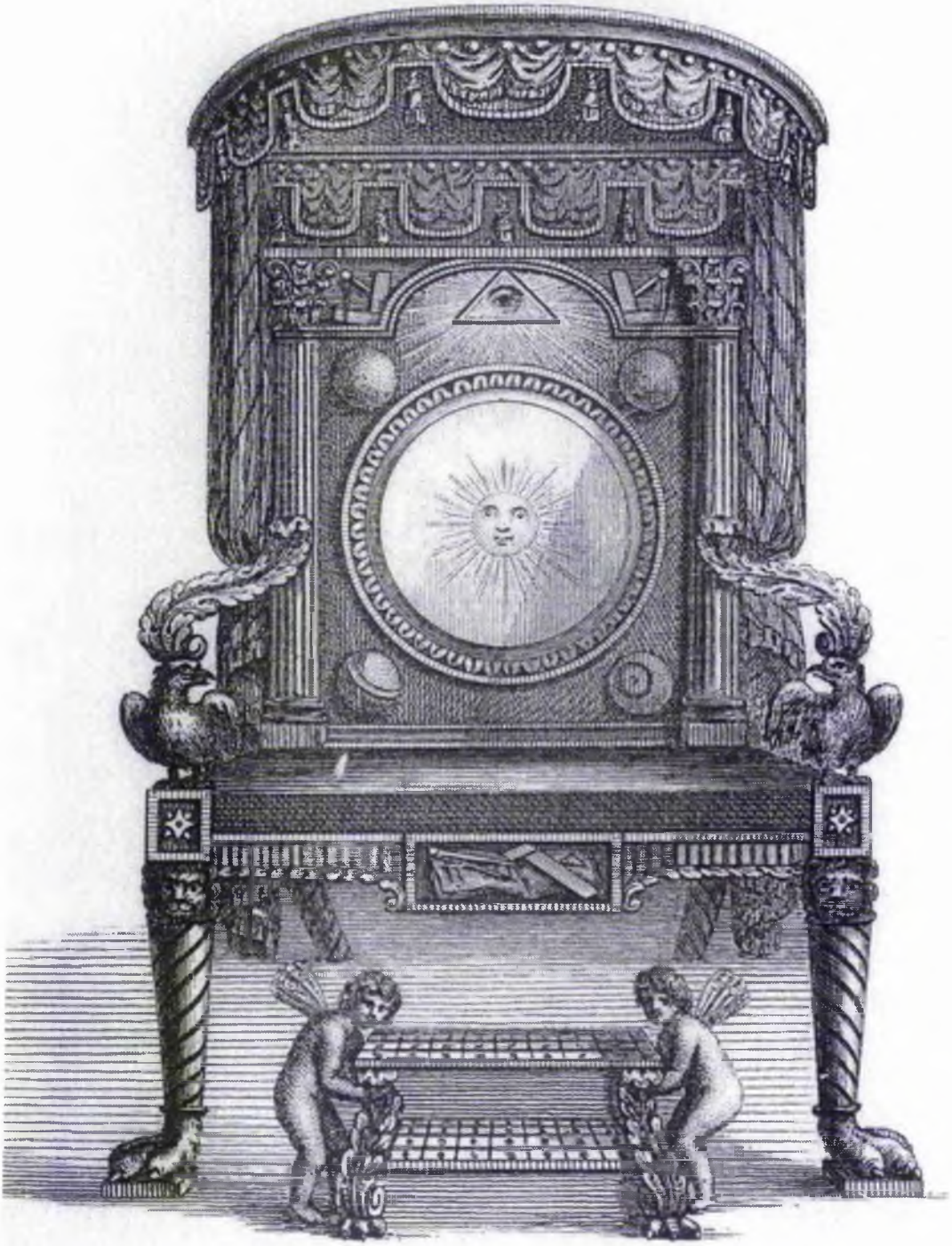

Figure 33

Thomas Sheraton. Design for a *Grand Masonic Chair*, *Cabinet Dictionary*, plate 4, 1803.
(Sheraton 1803)

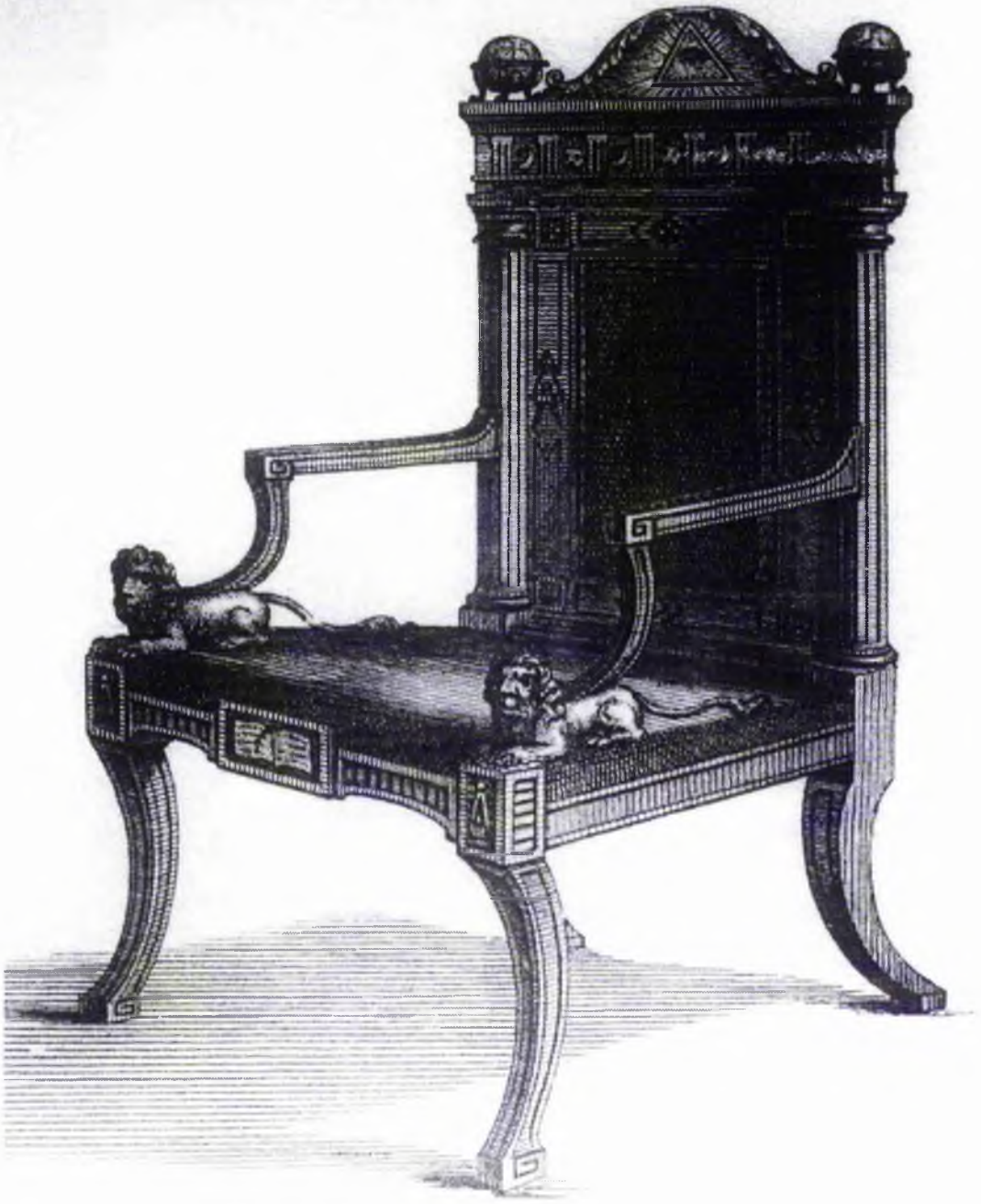

Figure 34

Thomas Sheraton
Design for a Grand Warden's chair, *Cabinet Dictionary*, plate 5, 1803.
(Sheraton 1803)

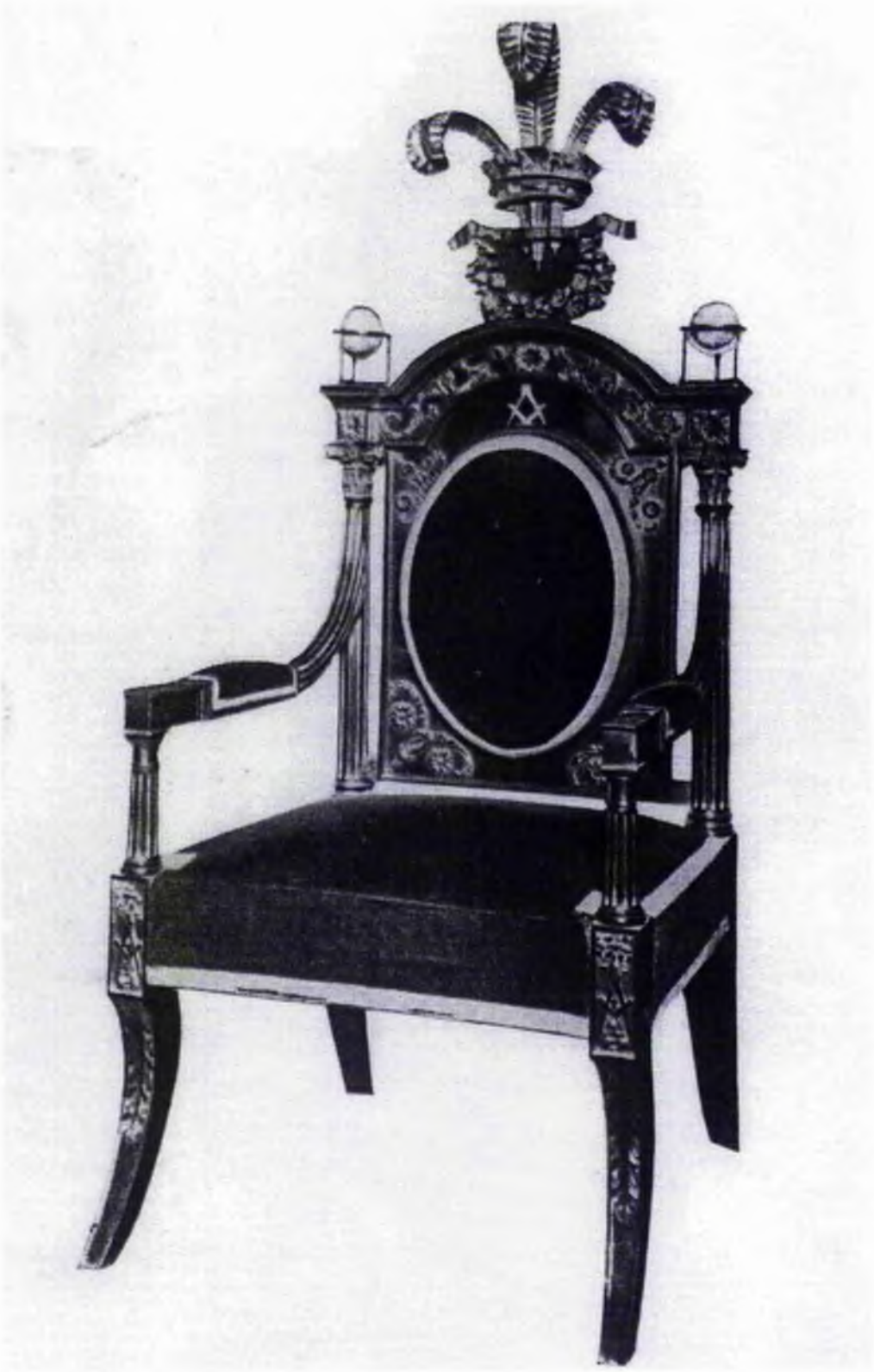

Figure 35

William and Charles Court
Master's chair, Lodge of Hospitality, Bristol, 1791.
(Powell 1936)

Figure 36

Elizabeth St Leger (the Hon. Mrs Aldworth), engraving, 1811.
(Hamill & Gilbert 1991)

known to have been made in 1791 by the firm of Court.[99] (Figures 33, 34 and 35.) The inward-curving *klismos* legs are unusual in a masonic context yet the use of columns, globes and the square and compasses as a purely decorative motif at the top of the front legs can be seen in many other chairs. There is no need to suppose that Sheraton had ever seen the Bristol chair. Indeed it seems unlikely that he would have been a freemason given the evangelical flavour of his religion and the ingenuous way in which he writes of the *profession of free-masonry, which, according to that fraternity, had a very ancient and honourable foundation.*[100] Certainly his name does not appear in the database for London lodges at Freemasons' Hall.[101] Sheraton's chair resembles still more closely that which appears in an engraved portrait of Elizabeth St Leger, a woman who had achieved a degree of notoriety following her initiation at Doneraile Court, County Cork, in 1713. The engraving, Figure 36, was made in 1811, 38 years after her death,[102] and the design of the chair clearly taken from the *Cabinet Dictionary.*

Sheraton gave two designs, one *in style for the grand master*, the other *to stand on each side of the grand master's, for the accommodation of those next in rank. The ornaments are in some respects emblematic of the profession of free-masonry*, but give no indication of signifying the office of the occupant and are reduced to decoration, something common to much eighteenth century English masonic furniture. It is worth quoting at length his description of the chairs:

> The circle in the back of the [Grand Master's] chair, is formed by a frame, and stuffed, let into a rabbit, and screwed behind. The representation of the sun is painted on canvas, and the stuff covered with it. The small circles which represent the earth and moon, with two planets above, may be carved in wood, and painted. The other parts of the chair should be in white and gold, or all gold. The back feet form Corinthian pillars, and the arms are supported by eagles, to denote the sublimity of the art. The books, compass, and the stars in front, with the triangle in the upper part of the entablature, shew that it is connected with geometry and astronomy.
>
> The canopy has a cornice ornamented with globules, behind which is drapery valence tacked to a tester, which supports the whole. The curtain on each side draws round to inclose the whole occasionally...[the second chair] is in the Doric style, to indicate the antiquity of the institution. The metope of the entablature have alternately the sun and moon carved in the mahogany. The back on each side of the stuffing is formed in imitation of the Doric soffits.[103]

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[99] In December 1790 members of the Lodge of Hospitality donated fifteen guineas for a new chair and *Bro. Court was desired to present the Lodge with different drafts of a Chair suitable for that purpose the next Lodge night.* William and Charles Court were among Bristol's leading cabinetmakers from around 1790 to 1820. Powell & Littleton 1910, p.492, and Walton 1976, p.60.

[100] Sheraton 1803, p.16.

[101] I am indebted to John Ashby for carrying out this search.

[102] Conder 1895.

[103] Sheraton 1803. p.16-17.

Sheraton in fact gives the chairs the 'allegorical' treatment which he used elsewhere, most notably for the State Bed in the *Drawing Book* of 1793. The symbolism draws on certain distinguishing attributes of the owner, or user, (here 'denoting', 'showing' and 'indicating' sublimity, geometry, astronomy and antiquity) and not on the use to which the piece is put. He appears to have had a sketchy notion of what *the profession of freemasonry* actually was: the liberal employment of planets in conjunction with the sun, moon and stars reinforces his claim that 'it' was concerned with astronomy, a connection not generally drawn, and while a book in masonic iconography is always taken to be the Bible, the suggestion here is of a scientific treatise. He is not forthcoming as to how the eagles *denote the sublimity of the art*. Whether Sheraton understood it or not, however, they might embody an esoteric reference to the importance of the 'word' in John's Gospel. The Master, as he who gives the mason word in its several forms to initiates, might appropriately appropriate the fourth evangelist's emblem.[104] St John the evangelist was, of course, the patron saint of stonemasons and many freemason's lodges are named in his honour.[105]

The architect responsible for the extension of the Grand Lodge building following the union of the 'Antient' and 'Modern' Grand Lodges in 1813 was Sir John Soane. In addition to this work he designed for the Grand Lodge room an 'Ark of the Covenant', a resting place for the 'Treaty' of the union. This triangular mahogany pedestal stood about a metre high, each corner borne by one of the three classical Orders (Figure 37).[106] The piece was made for £38. 11d by Richard Martyr, who worked regularly with Soane. In the following year, 1814, unspecified alterations were carried out which may have included the removal of the cupola to allow the ark to be used as an altar, carrying the Bible, square and compasses, as is clearly visible in Figure 18.

Taking these examples of English masonic furniture, many of which are exceptional for their grandeur and are almost certainly not representative of the entirety of English masonic furniture, some conclusions may be drawn concerning style. Firstly, all the chairs described above use emblems. The non-significant citing of emblems is not restricted to rococo medley-carved splats. There is, however, an increasing tendency to go beyond the tools of the stonemason and symbolic material derived from the

[104] This is suggested to me by a comment in Rose 1949, p.244. Rose mentions several lodge inventories which include 'eagles'. What is meant is unclear; they may have been lecterns.
[105] Occasionally other saints were claimed, including John the Baptist. See Stevenson 1988b, p.130. Edinburgh's Canongate Kilwinning Lodge was also known as St John's Lodge in honour of the Evangelist and an annual feast took place on 27 December. Officers were elected, however, on the 24 June, St. John the Baptist's day.
[106] It was destroyed in a fire in 1833. Burford 1992.

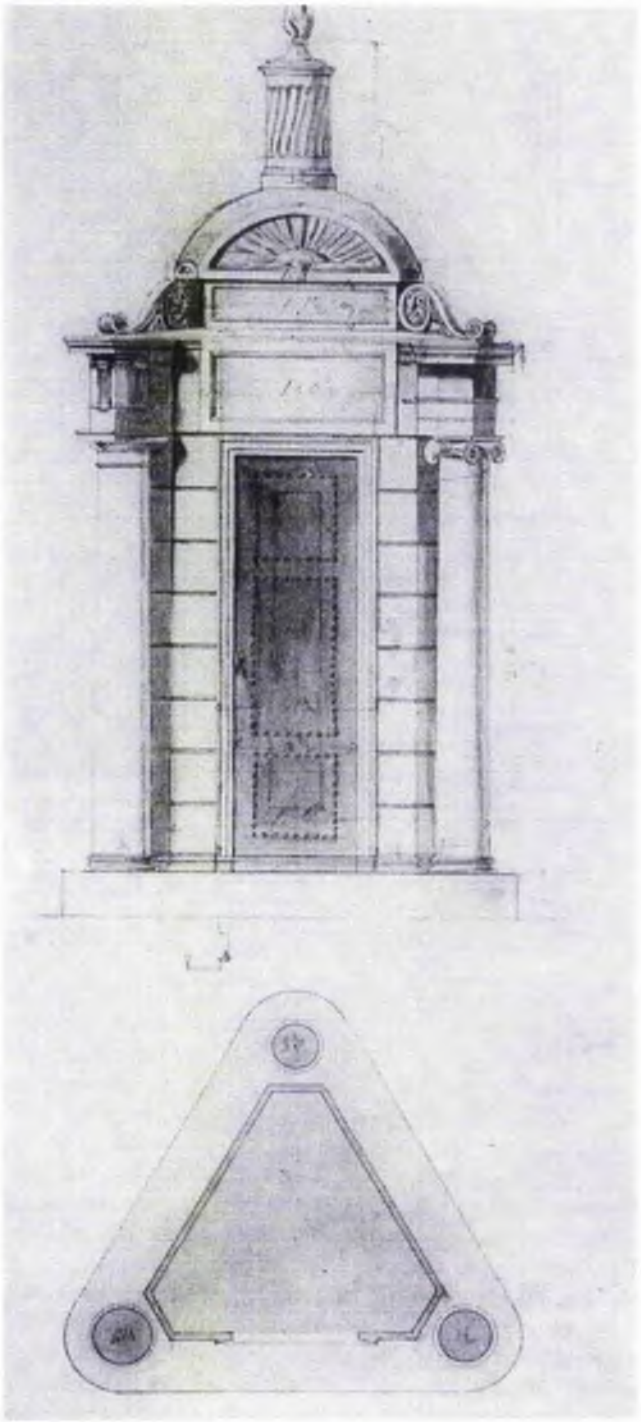

Figure 37

John Soane
Design for the Masonic Ark of the Covenant, 1813.
Sir John Soane's Museum, London.
(Curl 1991)

profession of architecture. Secondly, sophistication comparable to that exhibited in the work of Yenn and Fleming is rare. Many of the chairs, while superficially elegant, pull no punches, aiming for the maximum visual impact and extracting the maximum in symbolic content. Almost all, of course, are large.

Thirdly there is the question of fashion-consciousness. The freemasons of Bath and London would appear to have been as eager as any other gentlemen to display their wealth and fashion, some suites even going on display to the public. Dating on the basis of style is problematic if an item of furniture is suspected of being self-consciously unfashionable, an expression of a taste for the past.[107] Almost none of the furniture which can be given a firm date however, displays undue conservatism, taking into consideration the social class of the purchaser and the place of manufacture. Where something is *decades* out of fashion it was copied from or modelled on an existing piece. A rare exception is three chinoiserie, *Director* style chairs commissioned from a member of the Marquis of Granby Lodge, Durham, a Brother William Stott, over a four year period beginning in 1773.[108] Generally, however, English masonic furniture was genteel and, within limits, fashion-conscious, at times even distinctly showy.

Fourthly, the stage in the history of the lodge in which an item was made, or acquired second-hand, naturally varied considerably. Prices reflect, not surprisingly, the status of the patron as well as the regional location. Whether a lodge bought furniture and what it bought probably depended on who the members were. In some cases only a Master's chair was purchased and what expense could be spared was lavished entirely upon this one object. Finally, where the name of a maker is known he is, with one exception, a member of the lodge. That exception was Robert Kennett, maker of the Grand Lodge chairs. More work needs to be done, however, before it can be stated with assurance that commissions for masonic furniture were always placed with freemasons.

Any discussion of the Scottish trade incoporation Deacon's chair will inevitably begin with the twenty examples at Trinity Hall, Aberdeen.[109] The earliest dates from the mid-sixteenth century but the majority, of *caqueteuse* form with carved inscriptions commemorating their donation by Deacon Conveners, were made between 1620 and

[107] Sebastian Pryke, for example, in discussing the undocumented eagle-crested ceremonial chair in the Temple Newsam collection supposes that *such chairs would have been made in a consciously conservative manner*. Pryke 1990, p.98. This idea is discussed further below, p.84.
[108] The Master's chair was to cost £3 3s. See Cryer 1989a, p.57. Stott does not appear in *DEFM*. It should be noted that chinoiserie, although not of the representational variety, was acceptable in the lodge room.
[109] The subject of Learmont 1978.

1690. The *caqueteuse* form, tall backed with an exaggerated trapezoidal seat and arms which curve round to enclose the sitter, was the natural choice in many parts of eastern Scotland for ceremonial chairs before the advent of the furniture pattern book in the 1740s. Examples include a chair from St Monans Council Chamber dated 1618 and the Falkirk Stentmaster's chair of 1687. The commemorative nature of the chairs is further evidenced by the appearance of family coats of arms upon eleven out of seventeen. Most are also decorated with appropriate tools although only three bear the arms or pseudo-arms of a trade.

The Incorporated Trades of Old Aberdeen met in the Old Town House there and seven of their eighteenth century chairs survive, including three pairs. One pair, Figure 38, extremely plain with the exception of the carved cartouche, bear the arms of the Convener Court: two hands, one clutching a single broken arrow and the other a bundles of arrows, representing the phrase 'unity is strength'. Several stylistic elements are juxtaposed: the shape of the top rail strikes a claim for gentility while the curving arms appear to be a hang-over from the *caqueteuse* style. The rococo cartouche, however, (hardly a comfortable back rest) would seem to date the chair firmly in the 1750s or 1760s. Four of the remaining chairs, Figures 39 and 40, not *en suite* with these, are inlaid with trade emblems: those of the Wrights and Coopers (compasses, square and adze) and those of the Tailors (scissors and smoothing iron). In 1899 the Boxmaster of the Hammermen removed from the Old Town House two chairs, one similar to the Tailors' chair with an inlaid hammer and the date 1740.[110] The remaining chair still in the Old Town House, Figure 41, similar to the first two, bears the initials *GSP* and the date *1772*, presumably a commemorative inscription.

Perth was another city in which the trade incorporations were wealthy enough to continue exerting their influence into the eighteenth century and to continue to occupy halls of their own. The chair, Figure 42, thought to be that of the Tailors' Deacon, is a late-seventeenth century walnut, high, cane-backed armchair with boldly carved scrolls and crowns but no trade emblems of any kind. It may not originally have been made for the Tailors.[111] The Deacon's chair of the Wright's Incoporation, Figure 43, however, was commissioned in 1748 from an ex-Deacon.[112] The Wrights also appear to have used a primitive tall stool, Figure 44, for 'head-washing' apprentices. 'Head-washing' was a brothering ritual, usually administered informally by the peer group,

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[110] Anon 1899.

[111] If indeed it was ever their property. The early accession records of Perth Museum, where the chair is now housed, are poor. The Shoemakers' chair was on display at an exhibition of *local relics* in 1903 together with those of the Hammermen and Convenery. Anon 1903, p.33. Nothing is now known of these latter; might the 'Taylors' chair be one of them?

[112] See below, p.45.

Figure 38

Deacon's chair, Incorporated Trades of
Old Aberdeen, *c.* 1760.
Old Town House, Aberdeen.

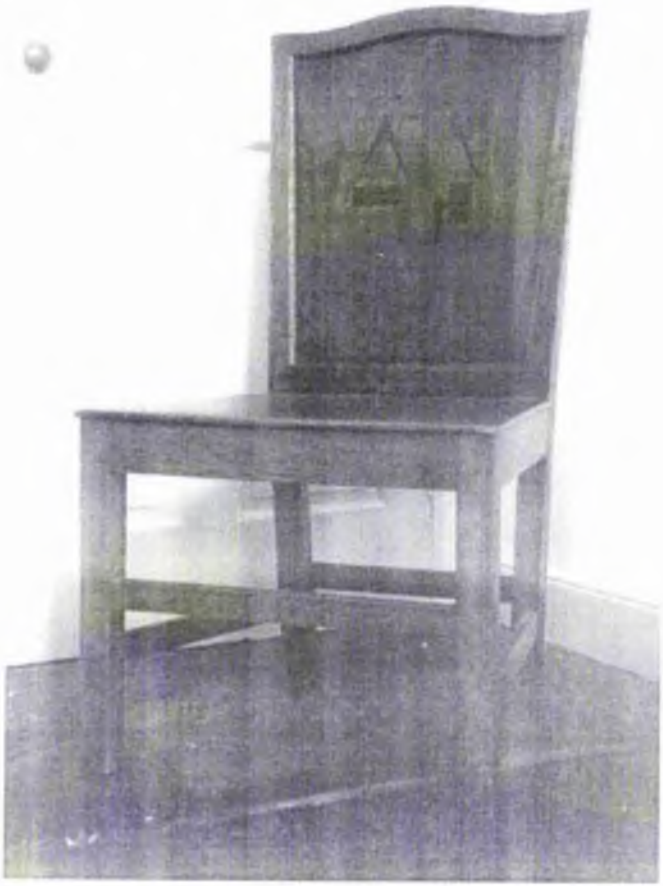

Figure 39

Deacon's chair, Wrights' and Coopers' Incorporation,
Old Aberdeen, mid-18th century.

Old Town House, Aberdeen.

Figure 40

Deacon's chair, Tailors' Incorporation,
Old Aberdeen, mid-18th century.

Old Town House, Aberdeen.

Figure 41

Commemorative chair, Incorporated Trades of Old Aberdeen, 1772.

Old Town House, Aberdeen.

Figure 42

Deacon's chair, Tailors' Incorporation, Perth, late 17th century.

Perth Museum & Art Gallery.

Figure 43

Deacon's chair, Wrights' Incorporation, Perth, 1748.

Perth Museum & Art Gallery.

Figure 44

Stool, Wrights' Incorporation, Perth, 18th century.
Perth Museum & Art Gallery.

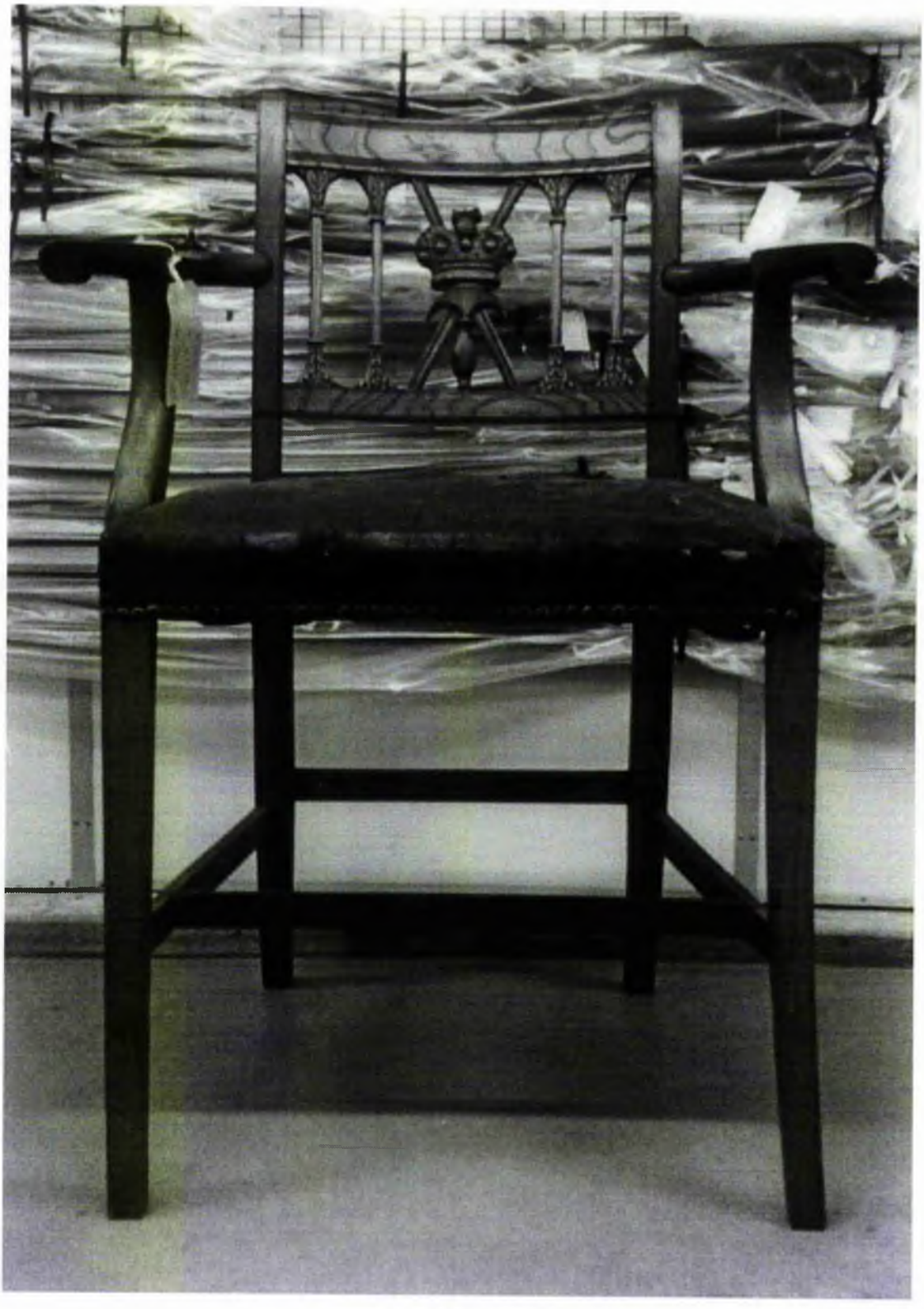

Figure 45

Deacon's chair, Shoemakers' Incorporation, Perth, late 18th or early 19th century.

Perth Museum & Art Gallery.

Figure 46

Thomas Heron. Deacon's chair, Hammermens' Incorporation, Edinburgh, 1708. Magdalen Chapel, Edinburgh.

(Ross & Brown 1915)

Figure 47

Deacon's chair, Fleshers'
Incorporation, Edinburgh, 1708.
Ashfield, Edinburgh.

Figure 48

Deacon's chair, Bonnetmakers' Incorporation, Edinburgh, *c.*1710.

Ashfield, Edinburgh.

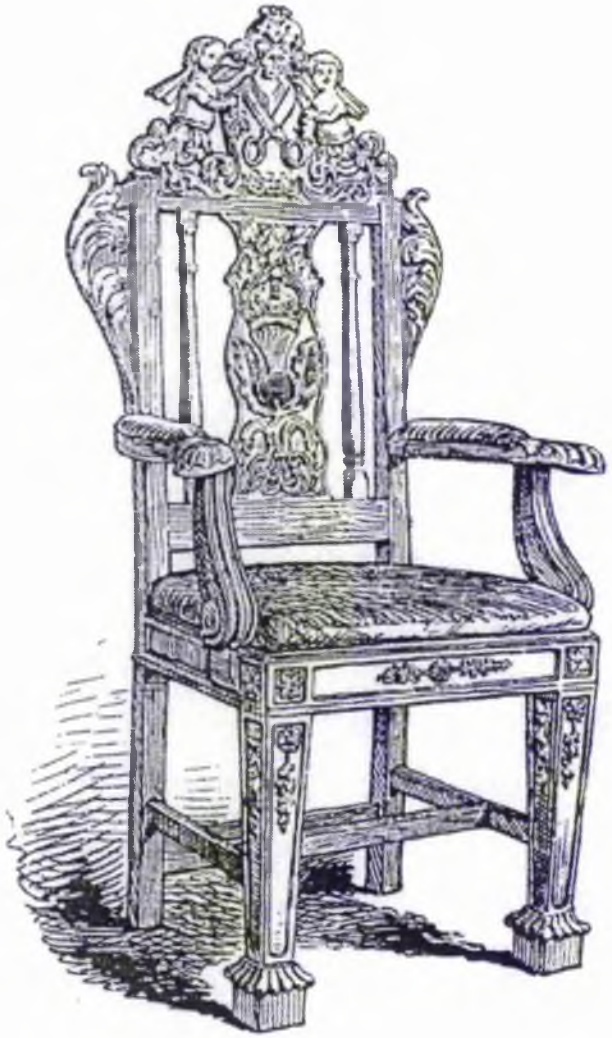

Figure 49

Deacon's chair, Tailors' Incorporation,
Portsburgh, *c.*1730.
(Dunlop 1890)

Figure 50

Deacon's chair, United Incorporation of Wrights and Masons, Edinburgh, late 18th century. Ashfield, Edinburgh.

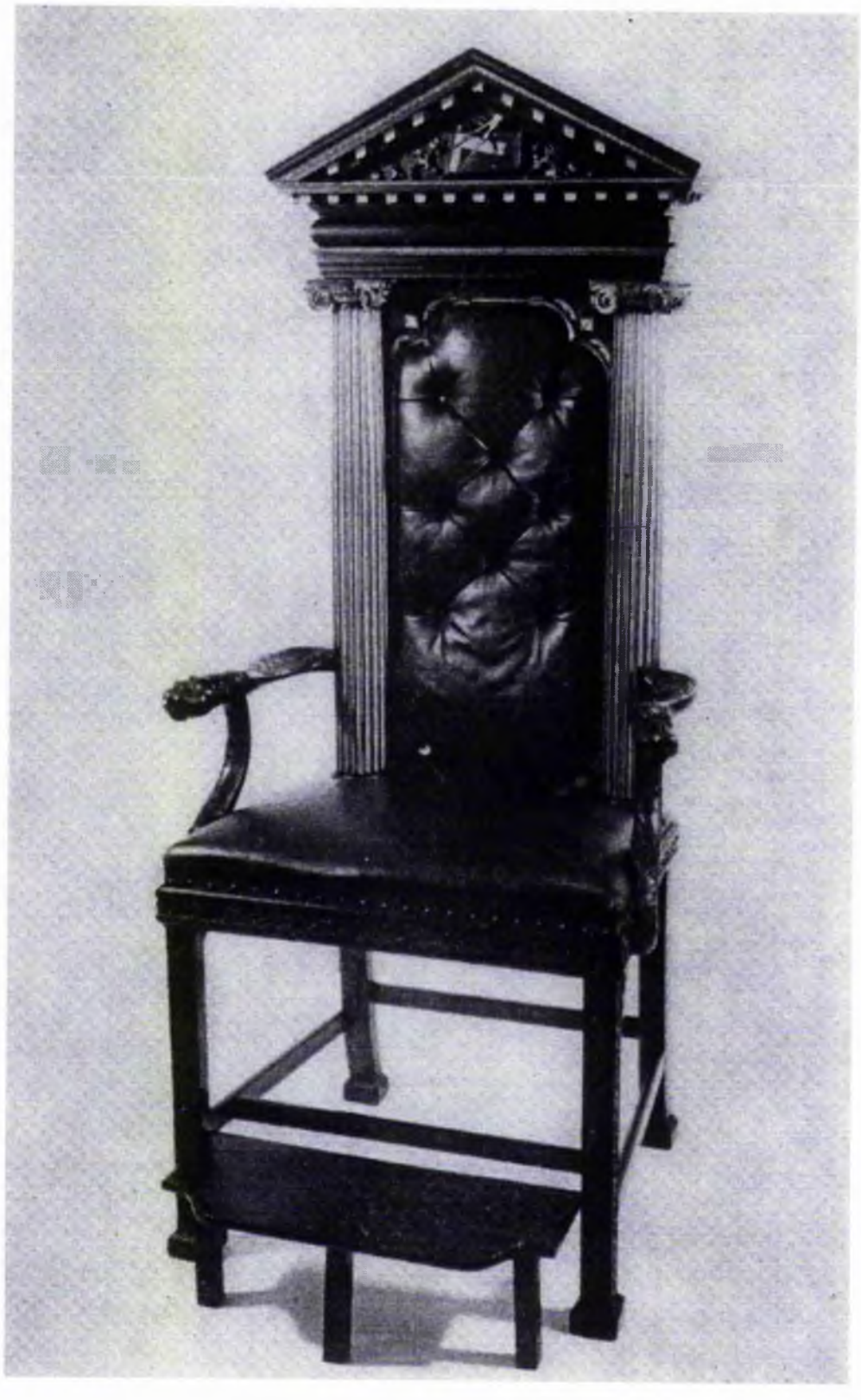

Figure 51

Master's chair, *c.*1760.
Freemasons' Hall, London.
(Hewitt 1967)

Figure 52

Braidwood. Clerk's chair,
Goldsmiths' Incorporation, Edinburgh, 1809.
Assay Office, Edinburgh.

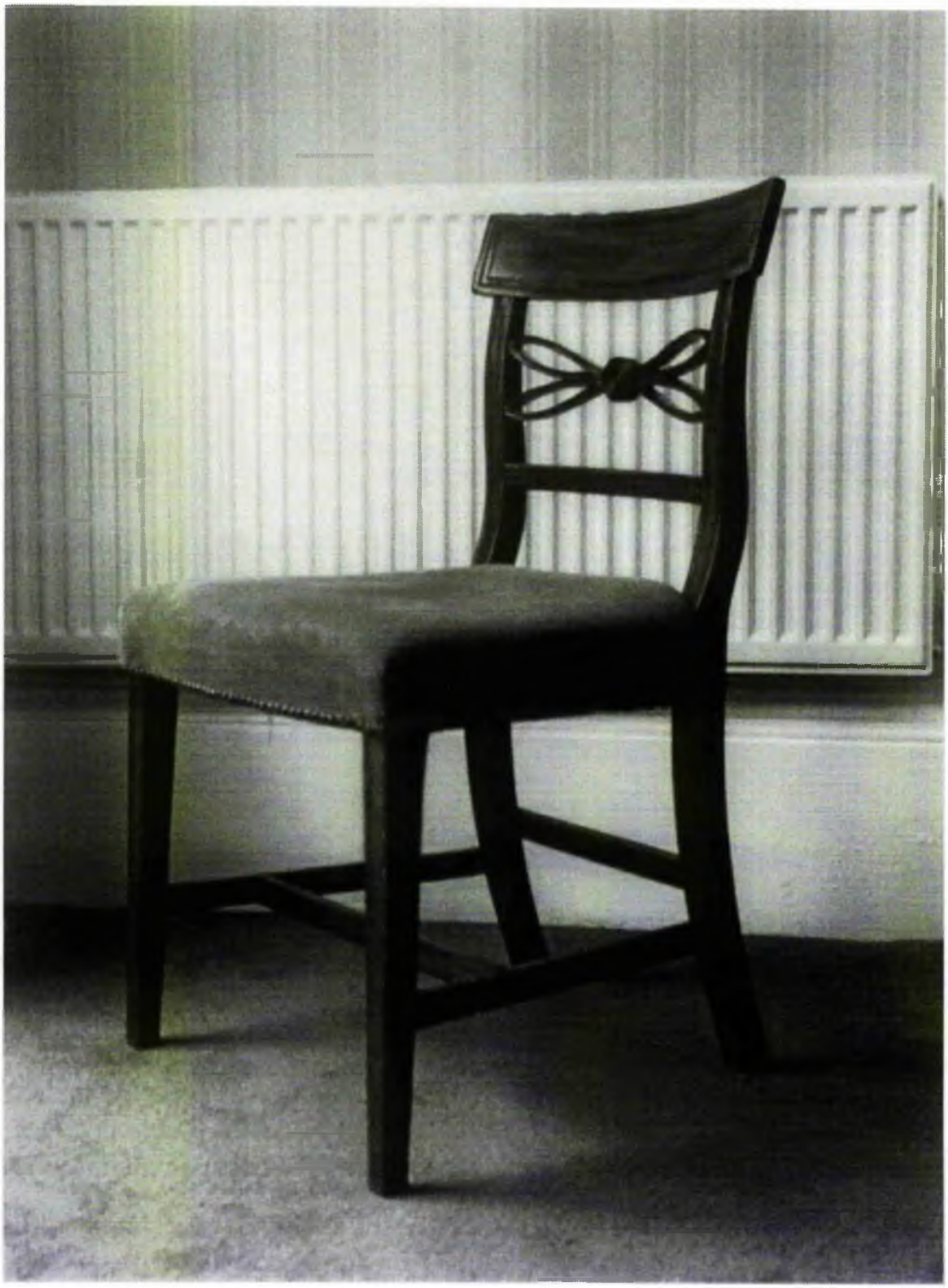

Figure 53

Braidwood. Boardroom chair, Goldsmiths' Incorporation, Edinburgh, 1809.
Assay Office, Edinburgh.

Figure 54

James Brown. Wright Deacon's chair, United Incorporation of Wrights and Masons, Edinburgh, 1815. Ashfield, Edinburgh.

Figure 55

?Francis Allen. Boardroom chair, United Incorporation of Wrights and Masons, Edinburgh, 1815. Ashfield, Edinburgh.

Figure 56

David Hamilton & Robertson Reid & Brother
Deacon Convener's chair, Glasgow Incorporated
Trades, 1819. Glasgow Trades House.

amounting to a pastiche of baptism.[113] Finally the Shoemaker's Deacon's chair, Figure 45, is an example of the vernacular brander-back form with the arms of the Shoemaker's, a crown and shoemaker's knife upon a saltire cross, carved in the centre of the back.

Three chairs, Figures 46, 47 and 48, made for the Edinburgh Hammermen, Fleshers and Bonnetmakers, the first two of which are dated 1708, form a sub-group of tall chairs in a fashionable, upholstered style with carved crests representative of the craft they belong to: a crown and hammer supported by two cherubs,[114] the arms of the Fleshers (bull's heads and axes) supported by two oxen, and a hat and scissors. These crests, the first known to have been carved by Thomas Heron in the Cowgate, resemble the scissors supported by cherubs which top the chair of the Portsburgh Tailor's Incorporation, Figure 49.[115] The Palladian legs of this chair suggest a date in the 1730s, however. Similarity of this kind was also evident among the London livery companies. In 1734 the Dyer's Company asked Abraham Saunders to make a Prime Warden's chair *resembling the pattern of the Master's Chair of the Skinner's Company.*[116]

A completely different treatment was given, however, to the chair belonging to the Deacon of the United Incorporation of Wrights and Masons, Figure 50. This is a difficult item to date: the laconic minutes and aggregated accounts of the Incorporation offer no clues.[117] An immediate comparison is suggested, however, with some of the English masonic chairs of the second half of the eighteenth century. The Edinburgh example superficially resembles that in Figure 51 yet there is considerably less carved work and the oddly-shaped tympanum is decorated not with any masonic emblem but with the arms of the Wrights and Masons. It is tempting to suggest that this chair was used by the Lodge of Edinburgh, which met at Mary's Chapel, the home of the United Incorporation. Certainly the inclusion of the arms of the Wrights would not by this

[113] Stevenson notes, however, that the drink consumed at such occasions could be provided by an employer and not the new apprentice as was later the case in the nineteenth century. Stevenson 1988b, pp.158-9. The Perth Lodge may also have used the stool. There is a cryptic entry in the minutes of the Lodge for 22 January 1741 that *8 Sh.Stg. Pd by BoxMr but one Shill. for washing Brother Stewart's head given him back.* Stewart, being initiated that day, was an Ensign. Was it that he was returned the head-washing fee because it was not considered necessary for a man of his vocation and quality to undergo the ceremony? Smith 1898, p.101.

[114] The rococo scollwork at the very top of the crest is an addition.

[115] The chair is now part of the collection of Edinburgh City Museums but regrettably it has not been possible to examine it.

[116] Graham 1994, p.63.

[117] Accounts for 1794-5, and involving four separate firms or craftsmen, appear to relate to either joinery work surrounding the Deacon's seat or simple bench seating. The Hall, Mary's Chapel as such, was renovated during 1794-5, the committee room two decades later (see below).

date invalidate the suggestion. Even if this were so, however, the chair was made first and foremost for ordinary Incorporation business.

Sets of seat furniture for the committee rooms of the Edinburgh Goldsmiths and the Wrights and Masons were made in the early nineteenth century, reflecting the changed nature of the incorporations. A large hall for the meeting of all craftsmen, the deliberation by vote of trade matters and the trial of men who broke the regulations of the incorporation was no longer needed. The administration of property became the main concern and demanded a small yet formal boardroom similar to that still in use at the Assay Office.[118] In 1809, when the Incorporation moved to a new hall on the South Bridge, the Goldsmiths appear to have purchased from Braidwood a Deacon's chair, a smaller but otherwise identical chair for the Clerk and twenty tablet-back side chairs.[119] (Figures 52 and 53.) The Deacon's chair departs radically from previous designs in not featuring any trade emblems. In 1815 the Wrights and Masons commissioned equally fashionable chairs for each of the Deacons, Figure 54, from Deacon James Brown paying £29 2s. 3d. Francis Allen was paid £28 14s. 3d. for chairs and a table, Archibald Bain £3 14s. for six chairs. The six armless chairs, Figure 55, which match the Deacon's chairs may be the six provided by Bain. £3 14s. is an apparently small sum, however, and these chairs were probably among the items to come from Allen's workshop.[120] Imposing ceremonial grandeur could, nevertheless, still be employed early in the nineteenth century. The Deacon Convener's chair in the Glasgow Trades House, Figure 56, was designed by the architect and member of the Mason Incorporation, David Hamilton, and made by Robertson Reid and Brother in 1819.[121] The sheer scale, together with the uniquely ostentatious display of solid silver (even at the rear), are exceptional.[122]

Despite certain similarities including size and emblematic decoration the Scottish trades Deacon's chair was generally modest in comparison with English masonic chairs. As a sub-group it underwent a distinct development during the period. The family heraldry of the earliest, gifted, Aberdeen chairs gave way to the craft heraldry of later corporate purchases. The early nineteenth century examples had possibly ceased in the full sense to be ceremonial. The vernacular characteristics of several of the chairs from Aberdeen and Perth provide a further contrast with both the majority of the Edinburgh pieces and

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[118] The Goldsmith's Incorporation would have ceased to exist were it not for its role administering the assay office.
[119] Dalgleish & Maxwell 1987, p.47.
[120] Accounts: 3 January, 16 February and 15 March 1815. Two large over-stuffed chairs belonging to the Wrights and Masons also form part of the collection at Ashfield.
[121] Inscription on the chair. Colvin 1978, under Hamilton.
[122] Even among ceremonial chairs in general: the inlaid plates of Glasgow University's Blackstone chair (1775), are brass. Jackson 1995.

the English masonic material. It is with the two groups in mind that I shall now consider Scottish masonic material.

CHAPTER 4

SCOTTISH MASONIC FURNITURE 1680-1840

The first items to be made exclusively for lodge use and paid for out of lodge funds were undoubtedly the boxes and chests which held the minute books and ready money. The earliest known seating belonging to a lodge, two caqueteuse chairs at Aberdeen, were commemorative pieces and are best regarded as part of the wider tradition within that area of making and presenting such chairs.[123] From the 1730s, however, Scottish lodges began to rent permanent meeting places and to acquire furniture. By the 1780s it was common practice and comparisons can be made between commissions. Moreover, it is often easier to establish the cost and origin of these pieces than it is of those presented by distinguished members (as custom came to dictate) in the later 19th century. The furniture surveyed in this work inevitably came from lodges enjoying some degree of prosperity at the time the items were made and thereafter. A considerable proportion of the furniture which survives from before 1840 was made in coastal towns. This reflects the eighteenth century prosperity of places such as Cromarty or Kirkcaldy, which were both ports and manufacturing centres, as well as their subsequent decline. Few pedestals survive from this period while it is probable that torchères made of wood were an innovation of the later nineteenth century. Consequently this chapter will focus on chests and chairs with short sections devoted to canopies, pedestals and flooring and lighting. The point in the development of each individual society at which items were acquired and whether or not they were made by a member of the lodge will be discussed before stylistic development by furniture type is considered.

The minute books of the Canongate Kilwinning Lodge give a fractured yet revealing account of how one lodge acquired furniture over a period of two hundred years and are worth considering in detail as a case study. The Lodge of the Canongate masons obtained a charter in 1677 from the Mother Lodge of Kilwinning,[124] as a slight to

[123] Regrettably, it has not been possible to examine these chairs, recent photographs of which may be seen in the Library of the Grand Lodge of Scotland. Each has an inscribed back panel (which may have been added to an older frame). One is inscribed *JAMES / MACKIE / jm / 1709*, the other *WILL THOMSON / ELDR SCHLATER / 1710*. The second panel is also carved with compasses, trowel, ?rule and slater's ripper. Thomson joined the Lodge in 1687, Mackie in 1693. Mackie was Master in 1696-7. Stevenson 1988a, p.193. For the presentation of similar chairs within the Aberdeen Trade Incorporations during the seventeenth century see Learmont 1978.

[124] The Lodge now known as Mother Kilwinning, No.0, which acted as a grand lodge in the West of Scotland during the period.

Figure 57

The Chapel of St John, St John's Close, Edinburgh.
View of the East end, 1992.
(Royal Order of Scotland 1992)

Figure 58

Stewart Watson
The Inauguration of Robert Burns as Poet Laureate of the Lodge Canongate Kilwinning, Edinburgh, oil on canvas, 1845. The Grand Lodge of Scotland.
(Curl 1991)

Figure 59

Detail of Figure 58, showing Master's chair.

Edinburgh's Lodge of Mary's Chapel. In 1735, however, when it moved to rooms in St John's Close (Figure 57), it was probably being revamped: surviving minutes begin on 13 February of that year with an order to *prepare regulations and by Laws* and a month later a renewal of the 1677 charter was sought. In a committee meeting on 20 March 1735 it was decided that the Treasurer should *pay the Steward Twelve shillings in order to be applyed towards the expenses of the furniture of* [the] *Lodge*.[125] The Master's chair represented in Figure 59, regrettably destroyed in 1993, may have been among the items purchased. A further 9s. 6d. was spent on the gothic canopy and curtains which enclosed the Master's chair.[126] On the 1 June 1736 it was decided that an agreement be reached with some *wright for making forms sufficient for the Lodge, which are to be covered with baze*[127] and by December of that year the room was in use. The total cost of purchasing the property and fitting it out came to nearly £400,[128] so that the cost of the furniture was probably not perceived as being of any great significance. Although there is no indication of what the *furniture* purchased in 1735 was it is clear from an inventory taken on 4 December 1751 that there were by that time in the hall *Five chairs for the officers acting in the Lodge / Twenty stools / Six Long Tables covered with Green & tresses therefor / Eight Forms or Long Stools*.[129] The tables and forms probably dated from 1736, the officers' chairs from 1735. In 1757, an organ made in London by Snetzlear was installed at a cost of £70.

It is not until the early nineteenth century, however, that the documentary record can be tentatively matched with existing furniture. On 8 November 1814 at a general committee meeting

> ...The secretary laid before the meeting several Estimates and plans which he has procured as directed at last meeting, and the same having been duly considered the following were accepted and orders were given to proceed with the work immediately vizt.
> ...2/. Do.[estimate] Covering the Tables with Green cloth by Mr Burke making Two new Chairs for Wardens and sundry small jobs which cannot be included until finished in all not to exceed £25.[130]

The two chairs (Catalogue 21) with their tapered legs and dyked seats are probably those referred to here, no other Wardens' chairs having been known since at least

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[125] Lodge Canongate Kilwinning, minutes, vol.I, 13 February & 20 March 1735. The quotations which follow are from the Minute books of the Lodge. Only one of those used, vol.III, is paginated. On 25 March a further shilling was disbursed to the Steward for *the expenses of the furniture*.
[126] I am grateful to David Currie for this information.
[127] Lodge Canongate Kilwinning, minutes, vol.I, 1 June 1736.
[128] MacKenzie 1888, p.10.
[129] Lodge Canongate Kilwinning, minutes, vol.I, 4 December 1751.
[130] Lodge Canongate Kilwinning, minutes, vol.II, 8 November 1814.

1888. They were visually integrated with the Master's chair by the use of the boss on the splat.

A certain John Burke was a leading upholsterer and cabinet-maker in Edinburgh during the 1820s and 1830s. A John Burke was entered, passed and raised between the 8 November and 14 December 1814.[131] The Burke known of as a cabinet-maker moved to St Andrew Square in 1824 but had had premises from 1814 at 35 Leith Street.[132] If these references are to the same man the Wardens' chairs would have been one of his very first commissions.[133] It is also relevant that Burke's reception of the commission led to his entering the Lodge as a member. It is clear from the minutes that those who served in the Lodge as waiters or musicians were entered gratis but had to be entered to maintain secrecy. This cannot have been the case with Burke, whose furniture was made by other hands in his workshops. Rather he was probably eager to join a prestigious network which might lead to further commissions.

At a meeting of 8 June 1815 *it was the opinion of the Committee that the Repairs, improvements and embellishments on the Lodge had been executed not only with great taste but with becoming economy.*[134] This is an important clue to the way in which Scottish masonic furniture of the period was perceived by its users. The ostentation of many English lodges during and after the regency of Prince George, Grand Master Mason of England, forms a stark contrast with the restrained character of Scottish material. Although most Scottish freemasons were a lower class of men than their English counterparts, the membership of Canongate Kilwinning included many professionals and gentlemen. They did, however, inhabit a culture in which decorum and frugality were virtues actively pursued. Alexander Carlyle described Edinburgh's Poker club, socially more exclusive than any lodge, as *frugal and moderate* while another mid-eighteenth century social club in the capital, the Cape, declared its intention to conduct its affairs in a *rational and frugal manner.*[135] Nevertheless, these chairs are particularly restrained and a match with the existing Master's chair may have been an important constraint on their design.

There are later tantalising references in the 1830s and 1840s to work done by a Mr Sandeman, *cabinet-maker*:

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[131] Lodge Canongate Kilwinning, minutes, vol.II, 14 December 1814.
[132] I am grateful to David Jones for this information.
[133] And the only furniture known to be from his workshops.
[134] Lodge Canongate Kilwinning, minutes, vol.II, 8 June 1815.
[135] Daiches, Jones & Jones 1986, p.36.

> [16 January 1835] The meeting having examined the repairs as far as finishing and having heard Mr Sandeman upon the same suggested farther improvements and decoration...
>
> [4 November 1840] The following accounts [unrelated to furniture] were laid before the Committee, & having been inspected, the Treasurer was authorised to pay them out of the funds in his hands...and to make such partial payments to account of Mr Sandeman's debt, as the state of the funds might warrent...
>
> [15 June 1846] The Treasurer produced a list of Accounts...The Account of Sandeman & Son, Cabinet Makers re. £11:10/- was also objected to by the Chairman the greater part of it having been sometime ago paid...[136]

This is very likely to have been the firm of George Sandeman, which is known to have traded at 8-9 Greenside Street between 1814 and 1827.[137] The Mr Sandeman mentioned was probably a son, however. Patrick Sandeman, *Merchant, Greenside St* and William Sandeman, also of Greenside street, were members of the Lodge at this time. [138] Although it is not clear quite who was involved and what goods or services were provided, when the property was conveyed to Charles Davidson in March 1835 to raise funds and an inventory drawn up, the entire furnishings appear to have amounted to

> One range of tables &c at the head of the Hall and forms for do. and masters chair. Five range of tables running from the top or cross table to the bottom of the hall and forms for do. The centre forms and tables being moveable. Senior and Junior Wardens Secretarys Treasurer Senior and Junior Deacons and Senior and Junior Banner Bearers Seats. Two setts of Crimson hangings and drapery for windows. The canopy and Pillars. The matting on floor grate fender and fire irons. The Organ & Orchestra.[139]

The seats for the Secretary, Treasurer, Deacons and Banner Bearers might have included the stuffed-over side chairs, Catalogue 34, which were clearly made to resemble the Wardens' chairs and which might have been purchased from Sandeman. The pillars were probably those which stand at the west end of the room.

Accurate representations of specific lodge interiors before the photographs which illustrated the printed lodge histories of the later nineteenth century simply do not exist. The one exception is Stewart Watson's reconstruction, painted in 1845, of the *Inauguration of Robert Burns as Poet Laureate* at St John's Close in 1787 (Figure 58). The minutes of the Lodge make it clear that *the painting of a mason lodge was a*

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[136]Lodge Canongate Kilwinning, minutes, vol.III, pp.200 & 351, and vol.IV, 15 June 1846.
[137] I am grateful to David Jones for this information.
[138] Lodge Canongate Kilwinning, minutes, vol.III, pp.202 & 198. The infamous Deacon Brodie, who was also a member of the Lodge, does not appear ever to have been consulted about furnishings. He was also a member of the Lodge of Edinburgh which met at Mary's Chapel. Dashwood 1962, p.318.
[139]Lodge Canongate Kilwinning, minutes, vol.III, pp.253-4.

novelty but that *the peculiarity of the event chosen*, which *was such that in its execution the mysteries of the Craft would not in the least degree be touched upon*, made it permissible.[140] The event had probably never taken place and none of men depicted were still alive.[141] As evidence of the appearance of the Lodge room in 1845, however, the painting is of some interest, showing as it does the Master's and Wardens' chairs together with trestle tables and the gothic canopy, its curtains undrawn. However, the Wardens' chairs of 1814 do not appear to be included suggesting that either Watson made some attempt at anachronism or, conversely, that they temporarily fell out of use around 1845. A punch bowl sits in front of the Junior Warden's pedestal and musicians fill the organ gallery. The apparent distraction of some of the members owes more to pictorial convention than the probable behaviour of eighteenth century freemasons, however. Columnar candlesticks are placed upon the Junior Warden's and Master's pedestals. There is no 'altar' in the centre of the room. Watson, as a member of Canongate Kilwinning Lodge, was not, of course, under any obligation to join before starting work.

From this account of the Canongate Kilwinning Lodge it is clear that items were made in response to the initial re-establishment of the Lodge and to replace material that was worn out. The Lodge was certainly eager to carry out *improvements* including, for example, four trompe-d'oeil mural portraits of Burns, Scott, Shakespeare and Byron painted by an unknown craftsman in 1833 for £12. As for the direction in which commissions were placed, Burke was approached before joining the Lodge[142] while *Mr Sandeman* was engaged to carry out his own suggestions.

Elsewhere items were acquired in similar circumstances, including following a period of dormancy or similar hiatus. A very clear case of this is recorded for the Lodge at Inveraray, founded in 1747. The surviving minutes begin in 1779 a year before the decision on St John's day 1780 that *Bro. John Stevenson be commissioned to make a chair at his first convenience, and to decorate it in a proper manner.*[143] Stevenson was a paid £7 10s. for Catalogue 11.[144] In 1825 it was recorded that the chair was to be repaired and reupholstered by Peter Campbell, cabinet-maker, for a sum not exceeding 10s. Significantly, the minutes had been kept only sporadically between 1820 and

[140] Lodge Canongate Kilwinning, minutes, 12 November 1845.
[141] Burns was warmly received as an honorary member but not made Poet Laureate.
[142] Although he could have been made a mason elsewhere the minutes would normally refer to the fact and do not do so.
[143] Johnstone 1909, p.16.
[144] He may have been related to the wrights of that name known to have worked for the second Duke of Argyll. In 1721 Francis Stevenson, Deacon of the Glasgow Wright's Incorporation, and his grandson, also Francis, were admitted burgesses of Inveraray while working on the rebuilding of the Duke's office houses. A Thomas Stevenson, wright in Glasgow, made floors for the Duke's lodging in 1744. Lindsay & Cosh 1973, p.434.

1825.[145] The Keith Lodge of Peterhead was chartered in 1754 and had been in existence since 1739. It had occupied the same premises continuously for almost fifty years when the Master's chair, Catalogue 19, was made in 1808. The hiatus here, however, was a reorganisation in which a new constitution and regulations were adopted.[146] The chair is, unfortunately, undocumented yet the date 1808 is inscribed upon the back.

More generally, however, the purchase of furniture was either the result of a move to new premises or simply due to the sudden availability of funds. The chair still in use in Cromarty, Catalogue 27, can plausibly be dated to the building of the masonic hall in 1825. Another, Catalogue 14, was made by John Sinclair in 1795, two years after the Biggar Free Operative Lodge had bought a house in the town centre, converting part of the property into a lodge room. This development had been necessitated by an influx of new members, eighty between 1785 and 1793. Although the Lodge appears to have been founded in 1727, or before, and never approached dormancy, it had no contact with the Grand Lodge until 1785 when it applied for, and was granted, a charter.[147] Sinclair, who was paid £2 4s. 10d. for the chair, was a local wright and a member of the Lodge, as was Robert Black who later added the ornamental cresting.[148]

The Lodge of Dunfermline, by contrast, had had its own premises since 1733 when the decision was made to buy three new chairs and it would appear to have been a question of improving existing arrangements. In the minute books there are the following entries:

> Anniversary Meeting of the Lodge 28th Decr. 1795
>
> ...
>
> They [the Lodge] also authorise the committee to provide cloathing for the different Office Bearers in the way they shall deem best also three chairs one for the Master & two for the Wardens.
>
> ...
>
> Meeting of the Committee of the Lodge 18th Augt. 1796
>
> ...
>
> Br Robt. Hutton gave in a Plan of a chair for the M[aste]r which the meeting approved of & recommends to any other Brethren to give in an

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[145] Johnstone 1909, p.30.

[146] Webster 1979, p.22. Webster, notwithstanding the evidence to the contrary, insists that the chair dates from the mid-eighteenth century. The Lodge derived its income from the bath house and pump room it operated alongside. This was a considerable enterprise consisting by 1800 of lady's and gentleman's hot and cold baths, changing rooms, a room for drinking the water, a coffee room, a billiard room, and a dance hall. The Lodge took its name from Earl Marshall George Keith.

[147] Hunter 1867, pp. 365-6.

[148] Jones 1987, catalogue 13. Jones does not state when Black supplied the cresting but it may have been in 1805 when a canopy was placed over the chair. The cresting cost £1 5s. 4_d.

> Estimate for what they will furnish it with two of a smaller & plainer sized for the Wardens & also any other of Town Wrights to give in Estimates also the Plan to be seen in Mr Hutton's hands of Estimats given in to him next week & afterwards submitted to the Lodge
>
> . . .
>
> Meeting of the committee of the Lodge 17th Novr. 1796
>
> . . .
>
> The meeting agree that John Williamson make the chairs ageeable to the Plan given in by Brother Hutton upon condition that the price of them shall be refered to Tradesmen as no estimate has been given in, the chairs to be ready betwixt and [sic] the fifteenth day of December next at farthest.[149]

An entry for 12 January 1797, in the accounts kept in the same book, states *Paid John Williamson order & Recipt 4/18/-* while a loose bill dated 20 December 1796 reads

> To the Master's Chair including the foot stool and staining £2/2/0.
> To the Wardens Chairs 28/- each, £2/16/0.[150]

These are the chairs Catalogues 16, 17 and 18. John Williamson and Robert Williamson *Wrights of Dunfermline* were entered Apprentices during 1796 and passed and raised during 1797. Baillie Robert Hutton was a stonemason and had been Master of the Lodge, like his father before him. That the chairs were made following a design given out by Hutton is notable as is the fact that wrights not members of the Lodge were invited to offer estimates.[151]

Purchases were not always made in the best of financial circumstances. Canongate Kilwinning Lodge fell into significant debt following its refurbishments of the 1830s while on 21 December 1810 the Secretary of Kilwinning Lodge had to report that *the funds are exhausted and* [the] *Lodge in debt by £3.16.2 Stg.* Given that the year's debits amounted to £21. 5s. 2d., a bill from Alexander Cunningham for *three Elbow chairs, and others for the Lodge* amounting to £12 15s. 2d. was a substantial liability. The next largest category of expenditure had been £3 5s. in charity.[152] The chairs had been ordered on 30 March 1809:

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[149]Minute book of the Lodge of Dunfermline, 1766-1813, entries for 28 December 1795, 18 August 1796 & 17 November 1796.

[150] Trotter 1984, p.99. I have not myself seen this bill. Another bill quoted by Trotter dating from 1812 is for *making a carpet and a pillow for the Right Worshipful Masters Chair* and came to 3s. 6d.

[151] The chairs are now the property of Lodge Elgin and Bruce, Limekilns, Fife. Given to the 10th Earl of Elgin by the Lodge of Dunfermline in August 1912 in return for a new set, the present set were then repaired by a member of the Lodge Elgin and Bruce around 1920. The Master's chair in particular has been greatly altered. It was presumably grander than the other two, costing 14s. more.

[152] Carr 1961, pp. 258 & 277-9.

> ...Bro. Alex.r Cunningham of Kilwinning to make Three Chairs, One for the Master, and one for each of the Wardens, of a higher Elevation than Ordinary, so that they may appear in their proper Stations when seated in the Lodge...[153]

Cunningham, perhaps the father of the *carpenter* in Pigot's *Directory* of 1825, was Treasurer of the Lodge between 1778 and 1781, Secretary between 1782 and 1797, Treasurer again for 1798, Senior Warden in 1801 and Treasurer once more in 1804. When he made the chairs, Catalogue 20, he must, therefore, have been at the end of his career and yet was able to work in the fashionable style.[154]

Where a maker's name is known in the context of the eighteenth century masonic lodge he is invariably one of the brethren or becomes so as a consequence: Burke (Canongate), Stevenson (Inveraray), Sinclair and Black (Biggar), Williamson (Dunfermline), Cunningham (Kilwinning). Several of the Barnet family of wrights belonged to Kirkcaldy Lodge and one of them supplied five officers' chairs, Catalogues 22, 23 and 24, in 1815.[155] Promotion within a lodge might be gained in return for services utilising one's skills as at Peebles where on 17 March 1787 the brethren decided that *George Davidson, an apprentice, for consideration of having presented the Lodge with a very fine cloth covering for the Master's Chairs* [sic] *should be past Fellowcraft and raised to Master which was accordingly done.*[156] This might be a reference to a cloth canopy which extended left and right over the Depute and Immediate Past Masters' chairs. More likely Davidson was an upholsterer and the 's' of the word *Chairs* an error on the part of the secretary. Similarly, an entry in the accounts of the Lodge Edinburgh St Andrew's for 5 October 1827 reads: *George Kemp, carpenter, Roxburgh Close, E*[ntered]. *P*[assed]. *and R*[aised]. *a/c, make Master's chair for his fees.*[157] (Catalogue 26.) Kemp, who had worked as a millwright in Peebleshire, shortly after became a draughtsman in the office of the architect William Burn and in 1836 won the competition to design the Scott Monument.[158]

At other times donations were made by senior members in return for no immediate material gain. At Edinburgh's Lodge of Mary's Chapel on 27th December 1729 *David*

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[153] Carr 1961, p.258.

[154] See below p.57. That he was clearly a literate man who could be trusted to keep the Lodge Box in order may be significant when considering the relative sophistication of his work.

[155] I am grateful to Andrew Haggart this information. All five chairs came to £8 15s. and were probably made by James Barnet, the only member of the family recorded in Campbell 1989 who was working as early as 1815.

[156] Rose 1951, p.101.

[157] Bonnar 1892, p.139, and Colvin 1978, under Kemp.

[158] Kemp's chair, Catalogue 26, is discussed below, p.55. A parallel might also be drawn with the box made by Alexander Thom, Figure 61, discussed below, p.47.

McClelland Wright burges of Edr, Deacon Convener of the Trades in 1725[159] and a member of the Lodge, *Generously offered to complement them with a Box with three locks and keys for keeping their money and wrytes.*[160] A Master's chair was given by the Master at Stonehaven in 1801. The inscription *Concordia Sola Gloria Fratum / is / True Masonry. / This chair a / Present from / Jno. Lawson / Master 1801* was painted on the splat together with representations of square, compasses, open Bible and three lighted candles. The Lodge, founded in 1738, had built a hall in 1775.[161] Gifts were generally unusual, however, during this period.

Furniture could change hands as in England. In 1779 the Royal Order of Scotland[162] bought from Lodge St Giles in Edinburgh, which was amalgamating with Lodge Canongate Kilwinning, a large amount of furniture which was in turn sold in 1782 to the Holyrood House Lodge for £15 on the condition that the Royal Order would retain a right to use it.[163] The Holyrood House Lodge had moved premises in 1781. The same lodge had previously acquired a Master's chair and other items from St David's Lodge, Edinburgh, in 1758.[164] Inventories show that this, the old Master's chair, was used from 1782 as a Depute Master's chair and the old Warden's chairs as chairs for the Treasurer and Secretary.[165]

The Deacon's chair of the Edinburgh Wrights and Masons may not have been used for lodge purposes but the reverse was probably the case with a similar chair made for the masons of Perth. (Catalogue 9.) On 1 October 1739 the Wrights' Incorporation, to which masons belonged but within which they were very much the junior partners, *unanimously agreed & enacted* that the *Decreit Arbitrall* of 1569 debarring masons from the office of Deacon should be rescinded.[166] This laid the way for James Crambie, the Master of the Lodge of Scoon and Perth and a stonemason, to be elected Deacon of the Incorporation at Michaelmas of that year and on 27 December, at the *Great Annual Meeting* of the Lodge, it was voted that *the company appoint a chair to be made at the public expense, to be put in the Trades' Hall, for the use of the public.*[167] The new chair must have been used at meetings of the Lodge until it

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[159] Bamford 1983, under M'Clellan.
[160] Dashwood 1962, p.288.
[161] Arbuthnot Murray, 1922. The chair was still in existence in 1922 but it has not been possible to ascertain whether it still exists.
[162] The Royal Order, founded before 1741, conferred two pseudo-chivalric 'higher' degrees.
[163] Lindsay 1935, vol.I, p.206. The sale consisted of officer's chairs, seven other chairs, five stools, five tables, the lustres and candlesticks, grates, fenders, kitchen furniture and various implements together with *The City's Arms, St John, St Andrew and other ornamental paintings.*
[164] Lindsay 1935, vol.I, p.131.
[165] Lindsay 1935, vol.I, p.208.
[166] Minute book of the Wrights' Incorporation. I am grateful to Ware Petznick for this information.
[167] Smith 1898, p.96. The use of word 'public', meaning the assembled company, is interesting.

acquired its own hall in 1831 and when *The Calling* [Incorporation] *appoint*[ed] *William Lindsay Wright to make an Elbow Chair for the tradeshall* on 30 September 1748,[168] Lindsay used the mason's chair as his model. The Perth mason's chair did not follow the Lodge in May 1831 to the Commercial Hall on the High Street, perhaps because the chair was felt to belong in the Wrights Hall. Additionally, however, the Master, Thomas Ower, wright, who secured the new premises, may have been in a position to dictate that a new set of matching gothic chairs, given by him, be used in preference. (Catalogues 29 and 30.) A relative of Thomas, James Ower, was contracted to carry out necessary wright work in the building and supplied twelve nine foot forms at £12 15.s.[169] In addition to the three gothic chairs, Thomas Ower may also have given the eight seats for other officers which resemble domestic hall chairs of the period (Catalogue 31).

Any analysis of the cost of masonic furniture is hampered by the paucity of information. Only a few simple comparisons can be made. The cost of the Biggar Master's chair (not including the cresting) in 1795 (£2 4s. 10d.) was roughly comparable to that of the Master's chair at Dunfermline in 1796 (£2 2s.) The Inveraray chair, by contrast, made fifteen years previously, came to £7 10s. The difference probably arises from the materials used (pine, oak and beech as opposed to mahogany) as well as the fact that the maker of the Inveraray chair would appear to have been a professional chair-maker, not a wright. Direct comparison between English and Scottish material is not possible largely because the product is not comparable. In 1791, for example, Bristol's Lodge of Hospitality paid £15 15s. for their new Master's chair, a very fine piece in the latest fashion. Twenty five years later, in 1816, a similar sum, £15, bought a large Master's chair and canopy for the Lodge of Edinburgh Journeymen.[170]

BOXES AND KISTS

Although not related to masonic ritual, boxes are the only non-documentary evidence for the freemasonry of the seventeenth century and speak for the trade origins of the movement. The formula whereby boxes containing cash had two or three locks to prevent their being opened without witnesses was a sound practical one that had been

[168] Minute book of Wrights' Incorporation. Lindsay was admitted to the Lodge in 1740 and later became Master (1760-1763). Smith 1898, p.129.
[169] James is recorded in trade directories as cabinet-maker and upholsterer, from 1826 to 1844 at Bridgend, in 1845 at Main Street and between 1850 and 1857 at 59 Methuen Street. I am grateful to David Jones for this information. The source for the rest of this paragraph is Smith 1898, pp. 189 & 191. The energetic Thomas Ower was Master between 1828 and 1832 and clearly the dominant personality in the Lodge at the time.
[170] Seggie & Turnbull 1930, p.91.

Figure 61

Alexander Thom. Chest,
Masons' Incorporation, Glasgow, 1684.
People's Palace Museum, Glasgow.
(Stevenson 1988a)

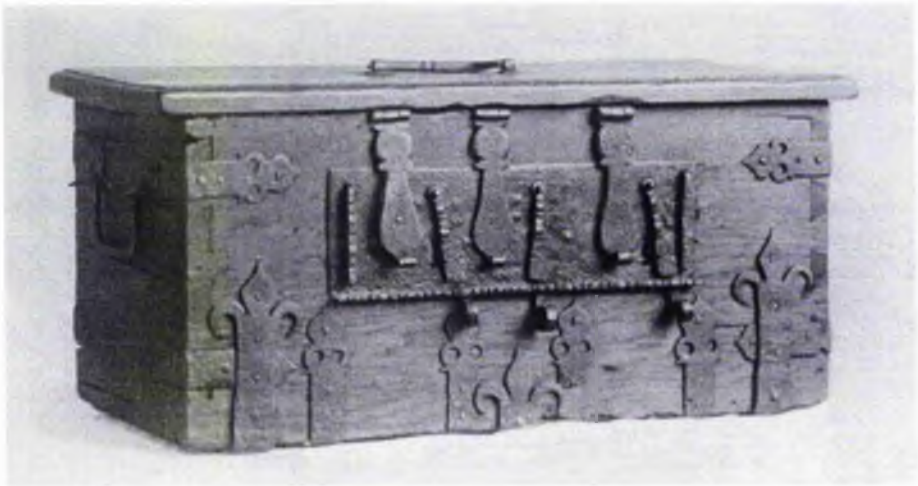

Figure 60

Chest, Lodge of Aberdeen, before 1670.
(Miler 1919)

used throughout the middle ages.[171] Nevertheless, the opening of a box could, therefore, be accompanied with a certain amount of ceremonial. Made in 1644, the Deacon Convener's box of the Glasgow Incorporated Trades, to take just one example from a trade incorporation, had three outer locks and an inner one.[172] The 'lockit kist' of the Aberdeen Lodge, Figure 60, referred to in documents dating from the late 1680s and one of the oldest surviving Scottish trade boxes, has three locks contained within a single unit. Another early example, with hasps and the lockplates attached to the wood by means of iron bands, is the property of the Kilwinning Lodge.[173] (Catalogue 1.)

It has frequently been assumed that the chest bearing the inscription *GOD SAVE THE / 16 KING 84 / AND MASONS Craft*, Figure 61, is one of two presented by Alexander Thom, *architectour*, who came to Glasgow in 1678 to work for the archbishop, Alexander Burnet. Burnet forced a reluctant Incorporation to admit Thom as a freeman in 1683. On 2 June 1684 Thom, carver in wood and stone, was ordered to pay his freedom fine in the form of *ane new carvit box*. The box is exuberantly carved with emblems of the craft and winged cherubs. There are two hasp locks to the lid with two further interior locks to the drawer which forms the lower third of the box. A second box with the inscription *GOD SAVE THE KING AND ST. JOHN'S LODGE 1686* was mentioned by Lawrie in his history of the Lodge, published 1927. No such box is known, however, and, although Stevenson readily accepts its existence to 'prove' that separate records were kept for the lodge, it seems likely that Lawrie was simply misinformed.[174]

The three locks of the chest belonging to the Lodge Kilmarnock Kilwinning (Catalogue 3) are contained within a single unit to which three separate chased escutcheons are applied. The original three keys survive. The Kilmarnock Lodge was established as an operative offshoot of Kilwinning Lodge in 1734 and the chest probably dates from that time. It is comparable to the Deacon's Box of the Glasgow Bakers' Incorporation made in 1719.[175] Each have long tapering strap hinges with

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[171] In England in 1166, for example, a royal warrant was issued ordering that a chest with three locks for contributions towards the crusade be placed in every church, the keyholders to be the priest and two churchwardens. Chinnery 1979, p.363. In the late fifteenth century the London Goldsmiths' Company kept an aumbry for *evidences* which had three locks, a box for its common seal which had four and a revenue chest which had six! Reddaway & Walker 1975, pp.256 & 272. See also Eames 1977, especially p.134.

[172] Muir 1923, p.53.

[173] Carr assumed it was the *new box* for which *Bro. Boyd* was paid 5s. 6d. on 20 December 1765. Although the mouldings which reinforce the edges may be additions, however, it would appear to be late seventeenth or early eighteenth century. There is no other record in the minutes of the making of a chest or box. Carr 1961, p.257.

[174] Stevenson 1988a, pp.76-77 & notes p.170. Lawrie 1927, pp.60-62.

[175] Illustrated in Ness & Ness 1931, p.26.

fleur-de-lis terminations but internal locks and decorated escutcheons. The lid of each has a thick semi-circular moulding around three sides, the rear left to rest upon a ledge when open. Also with strap hinges and three internal, but separate, locks is the chest of the now extinct Lodge of Haughfoot, Catalogue 2, made in 1727. William Murray, a member of the Lodge, was given £1. 10s. Scots for the chest and £4. 4s. Scots for the ironwork (a total of 8s. 6d. Sterling). The central lock, however, would appear to be an addition since the minute which records the payment to Murray also states that the Boxmaster was to *give the Inner Keye to Walter Scott* [the Preses] *and to Keep the outer Keye himselff.*[176] There were other exceptions to this rule of three locks: Kirkwall Kilwinning obtained a chest with two locks in 1736[177] while the Lodge of Scoon and Perth elected 'Right-hand' and 'Left-hand' keykeepers throughout the eighteenth century.[178] The Secretary of the Lodge of Dalkeith's box, Catalogue 4, apparently made in 1737, was fitted with a single lock. This last was clearly intended simply for the storage of documents being shallower than others and lined with padded cotton cloth.

Most of these small boxes did not contain interior compartments but many larger chests had a till, invariably at the left hand side with a lid hinged on itself. The example, Catalogue 5, from Inveraray was not made to store funds and is consequently larger than the examples discussed so far. For 27 December 1786 the minutes record that *the Lodge stood much in need of a chest for keeping their floor cloths and cloathing.*[179] Although the chest is today lacking its original fitments, reused in 1889 on a larger replacement, the circular stringing which enlivens the lid can still be admired. It was exceptional, however, for chests to be given as much elaboration, including symbolic decoration, as that from Renton, Catalogue 6, made in 1791. The front face is inlaid with the square and compasses above three steps and below this, within ebony and boxwood stringing, are the words *LEVEN ST. JOHN* in cherry, or a similar fruitwood, proud of the surface. Below, similar standing-proud numbers either side give the date *17 91*. The three steps are emblematic of the three degrees of initiation. There were once internal compartments to this chest but not a till. The necessity for chests in which to store the ever growing amount of lodge paraphernalia is illustrated by a resolution on the part of the Lodge of Dunblane on 7 January 1773 that James Stirling, a wright entered into the Lodge in 1772, should

[176] Carr 1951, pp.25 & 27. Murray entered the Lodge, which existed between 1702 and 1763, in 1713 and was Preses for the year 1720. Nowhere is Murray's profession recorded. He was simply given the responsibility to *have a box ready.*
[177] Rose 1951, p.102.
[178] Smith 1898, pp.78 & 160.
[179] The till is nevertheless fitted with a lock. I am grateful to George Johnston for this quotation. For floor cloths see below p.65.

make a new box for aprons from the best mahogany for 15s.[180] New chests appear in the cash books of the Lodge Ayr St Paul in 1799 (£1 1s.), 1805 (£1 10s.) and 1813 (only a carriage charge of a shilling is mentioned) suggesting that possessions were each time out-growing existing storage capacity.[181] By the early nineteenth century kists as large as Catalogue 7, from Forfar, were being made but still with the traditional three locks. The painted decoration indicates the relatively humble social context in which it was produced although the neo-classical swags perhaps suggest pretensions to elegance and gentility. Also notable is the numbering of the three locks which calls attention to this feature, and by extension to the keyholder tradition, financial probity and the ritual of opening.

SEAT FURNITURE

The impression gained from documentary evidence, that before the nineteenth century it was not unusual for only a Master's chair to be specially commissioned, is reinforced by the physical evidence of a great many Master's chairs themselves which survive, undocumented, without corresponding Wardens' chairs. Larger or more ornate chairs may have been selected for Wardens and other officers but where funds were limited these were allocated towards a chair which, possibly in combination with a canopy and drapery, created a focal point at the east end of the lodge room.

It is interesting to note that the now much damaged chair, Catalogue 8, reputedly used by the Duke of Perth at the first meeting of the Lodge St Michael, Crieff, in 1737 should be of *caqueteuse* form. The chair was used as the Master's chair thereafter and is indicative of the sort of chair of precedence on which the Master in a modest rural community would have sat, his brethren probably being seated on stools or benches. In common with several other Master's chairs of the eighteenth century the St Michael's chair is not marked with masonic emblems of any kind. Distinction was achieved solely through size although in time the sense of continuity which age provides would have served, together with aristocratic associations, to ensure that the chair was not supplanted by something more genteel. Other lodges commissioned plain chairs, however, including some with permanent meeting places of their own. Three chairs belonging to the Lodge of Dalkeith, Catalogue 10, were reputedly made in 1764 when the Lodge bought its own premises. The horizontally-curved arms are scooped out along the inside edge and suggest the vernacular caqueteuse tradition. Presumably made locally, they are embellished only by the egg-turned uprights and some profile cutting. Nor are the Wardens' chairs made for the Lodge of Dunfermline

[180] Hatten 1954, p.108.
[181] Thomson 1905, appendix.

decorated with emblems.[182] They may, however, have been identified as masonic by the use of the column motif on the backs. It cannot be proved that any symbolism was intended by Robert Hutton, the designer of the chairs, but both the duo of Jachin and Boaz and the trio of Doric, Ionic and Corinthian would have been known to him through printed sources.

A plaque affixed to the large 'Windsor' chair, Catalogue 12, used by the Master at Loudoun Kilwinning Lodge, Newmilns, states that it was sat in by Robert Burns when he was made an affiliate member of the lodge on 27 March 1786. On that day the minutes record that the Lodge assembled at *Mrs Mansons*, presumably a back-room ale house, although it generally met at the house of one Moses Smith. It seems unlikely that the chair was the property of the Lodge at that time and if it was ever sat in by Burns it is likely that it was given or sold to the Lodge at a later date.[183] The chair has, nevertheless, been used by the Master for a considerable time and appears to date from the late eighteenth century. Turned chairs were not commonly made in Scotland but comb-backed 'Windsors' without central splats were characteristic of the Irvine Valley. Darvel, one and a half miles (2.4 km) east of Newmilns, was a centre for their manufacture throughout much of the nineteenth century.[184] When John Lyon[185] gave a chair to the Lodge in 1834 for the use of the Senior Warden (Catalogue 32) it too lacked emblems or structural features from which symbolic meaning could be drawn. Large, it is nevertheless an essentially domestic design. The yoke-shaped top rail and tablet stay rail and sloping back are 'Grecian' in conception, as in some measure are the dropped arms and serpentine supports. The slightly splayed front legs and the reduction of the dyked seat and its rails at the corners are unusual features.

Another chair with Burns associations and also lacking documentary evidence is the Master's chair of Lodge St James, Tarbolton, Catalogue 13. Again, however, the chair can plausibly be dated to the late eighteenth century. Founded in 1771, the Lodge almost immediately split in two, was reunited and split again, this time with Burns leading the breakaway faction. Burns was elected Depute Master of St James' Lodge (its rival being St David's) in 1784. Meetings took place at the public house belonging to the Treasurer. Burns left Ayrshire in November 1786 and last attended a meeting of the Lodge in 1788.[186] Always meeting at this one location it seems probable that the chair was made specifically for Lodge use: its height alone would render it abnormal in

[182] It is impossible to know whether the master's chair was distinguished by the use of emblems.
[183] There is no mention of such a gift or sale in the minute books up to 1832, however.
[184] Jones 1995. Compare Cotton 1990, figures NE114 or TV17.
[185] Lyon is listed as one of two surgeons resident in the parishes of Darvel and Newmilns in Pigot 1825.
[186] Webb 1990, pp.214-215.

a domestic context. The slightly trapeziodal back is a blend of vernacular 'brander-back' form with three rather fashionable uprights. These are close to the shape of the slats in plate 9(Z) of Hepplewhite's *Guide* (1788). If the design was influenced by Hepplewhite's *Guide*, it is most unlikely that Burns ever sat in it. Nevertheless, both the Newmilns and Tarbolton chairs would appear to have survived because of their Burns associations. It is impossible to know whether the Wardens had comparable chairs as the minute books of both lodges, which are in general laconic, are silent on such matters. It should, nevertheless, be remembered that the Canongate Kilwinning books, with their sometimes lengthy entries, did not always record the purchase of furniture which is known from later inventories to have existed. Thus although a firm Burns association and, consequently, a degree of precision in dating, are not possible, the use of these two chairs by the Masters of these two lodges in the late-eighteenth century seems likely.

Among chairs which employed emblems the earliest did so in a straight-forward heraldic manner. Among them would appear to be Catalogue 9 made in 1739 for the Lodge of Scoon and Perth, which was not, of course, for exclusive masonic use. The emblems, the square and compasses fret cut into the splat with polychrome inlays either side representing saw, chisel, maul and ax, include Wright's emblems (saw and ax) and the chair was made to accommodate the senior mason within the Wrights' Incorporation. The use of square and compasses arranged in the familiar XX position, in place of a device based upon the arms of the masons (three towers and chevron with a pair of compasses arranged chevronwise) would suggest, however, that the chair was conceived of as masonic. The same square and compasses device appears at the top of the Inveraray Master's chair, Catalogue 11, placed within a cartouche. The medium is heraldic but the content refers to what are the two most important tool emblems in the masonic repertoire, two of the Three Great Lights.

This, at least, is one interpretation. The square and compasses, however, sometimes in an arrangement with the compasses below the square, also appear as the arms of several wrights' incorporations.[187] Consequently the attribution of Catalogue 9 as the chair of 1739 and the chair in Figure 43 as that of 1748 may plausibly be reversed. The serpentine vasi-form splat of the chair in Figure 43 would appear, *ceteris paribus*,

[187] In particular those of Edinburgh. Both the Wrights and Masons Incorporations at Stornoway used such arms. Generally, however, the masons, as for example in Edinburgh adopted the towers and compasses formula, taken ultimately, as were many trades arms, form the appropriate London livery company. The Edinburgh Wrights appear to have altered the arrangement of the two tools during the eighteenth century to one in which the square rests upright upon one end, the compasses hooked over the horizontal blade of the square. This mutation, used for example on the chair in Figure 50, was easily accomplished since these arms were not matriculated with the Lord Lyon. Only the Stornoway and Aberdeen Trades had in fact ever bothered to do so.

to predate the pierced splat of Catalogue 9. One can either interpret the awkwardly rigid Catalogue 9 as a poor copy of the finely veneered and carved 'Figure 43' or, vice versa, as the inferior prototype. The superstructure above the splat, however, which, together with the form of the arms and the four pad feet, suggests a relationship, is far more confidently handled in 'Figure 43'. It is difficult to see this unusual feature as original to Catalogue 9. Confusion between the two over the years is easy to imagine, particularly once the Lodge left the Watergate. Nevertheless, whichever chair is which, we do know for sure that the Wrights' chair was modelled on the Masons' chair (and not vice versa) and that the similarity testifies to a close relationship between the material culture of trade incorporation and masonic lodge at this date in one locality.

Apparently the first masonic Master's chair in Scotland to break away from conventional ceremonial designs of this kind is that made in 1795 for the Biggar Free Operative Lodge, Catalogue 14. It is an exceptional piece, neither fashionable nor strictly vernacular, but modelled upon chairs of the mid- to late-seventeenth century (compare Figure 42). The painting of pine sections to resemble oak suggests an intention to deliberately deceive, not simply to convey a sense of tradition and antiquity but to claim a history beyond 1727 when the Lodge appears to have been founded. The emblems, carved in relief and gilded upon a dark blue background, are the compasses, a level and a skull and crossbones.[188] More emblems were added when the cresting was made. The square and compasses in their usual double-X configuration lie upon a book, the Bible, completing the arrangement of Three Great Lights. This representation of the actual practice of laying the square and compasses upon the open Bible during initiations was perhaps repeated at Stonehaven in 1801.[189] The three lesser lights, sun, moon and seven stars, feature above. In stark contrast to the chair itself the cresting was executed in a neo-classical style with a gilt, cast iron urn finial. The Corinthian columns are painted gold and support a semi-circular arch with keystone, a feature the chair shares with that at Inveraray.[190]

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[188] The blue, which may have been brighter two hundred years ago, might have held a symbolic meaning. Such meanings are, however, difficult to reconstruct since colour symbolism is notoriously fluid and has tended to occupy a position on the fringes of British freemasonry. Blue is the colour of craft masonry in England, green of the craft in Scotland, red of the Royal Arch in both countries. Susan Buck, commenting on a chair made in 1870 by John Luker for a Lodge in Ohio, probably goes too far in suggesting that the blue colouring of that piece was meant to suggest chastity, fidelity, immortality and prudence as well as the canopy of heaven. Her acceptance of the claim that the depiction of the letter G within a square and compasses originated in the USA around 1873 is similarly unwarranted. Buck 1994, pp. 168-9.

[189] See above, p.44. Catalogue 41 also features this combination.

[190] This does not indicate, as might be thought, the presence of Royal Arch freemasonry. Neither Inveraray nor Biggar had Royal Arch chapters at this date. Catalogue 25 has a similar arch.

The globes which top the stiles of the chair may be the work of Black or still later additions: they would appear to have been turned as door knobs. Both are terrestrial globes, carefully painted in green-blue and brown-yellow, crossed with lines of latitude and longitude and certain areas labelled with the names of continents and seas. The form of the seas and continents bear no relation to printed maps, however. If the craftsman was inspired by prints of Kennet's Grand Master's throne he misunderstood or did not know of the concept of masonry universal, according to which one globe is celestial. Moreover his ignorance of cartographic products is a revealing glimpse of how few of these reached late-eighteenth century Lanarkshire artisans. The Lodge also uses two back-stools of the late-eighteenth or early-nineteenth century, Catalogue 15, for its Wardens. These four-legged, jointed stools have crude brander backs which resemble that of the Precentor's chair made in 1788 for Biggar parish church.[191]

Every chair examined in this survey made between 1800 and 1840 is decorated with emblems, the only exceptions being that given to Loudoun Kilwinning Lodge in 1834 and another, Catalogue 33, used at Lodge Woodhall St John's, Bellshill. (This latter was reputedly given by the first Master in 1823 and is used as a Master's chair. Made of birch, it recalls designs for 'rustic' garden furniture by Robert Manwaring and others.[192]) In several cases the emblems identify the sitter; in others the name or number of the Lodge is also included in the decoration. There is also a tendency to make greater use of structural symbolism: architectonic forms and the classical Orders of Architecture. Perhaps the most notable development, however, is that several of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century officer's chairs are extremely tall.

Today the largest of the three Dunfermline chairs measures 195.5 centimetres in height.[193] The seat is 80 centimetres from the ground, which would require a foot-stool approximately 30 centimetres high, while the back towers over the head of the sitter. Few foot-stools in fact survive,[194] perhaps because feet could be placed upon stretchers or pedestal shelves. Certainly only one was ordered at Dunfermline, for the Master's chair. The five chairs, Catalogues 22, 23 and 24, made for the Lodge of Kirkcaldy in 1815 were possibly modelled on the Dunfermline chairs. The Master's chair is 198 centimetres tall, the two Wardens' chairs 179.5 centimetres tall and the

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[191] Catalogue 12 in Jones 1987.

[192] Plate 26 of Manwaring's *The Cabinet and Chair-Makers Real Friend and Companion* (1765) in particular. Ward-Jackson 1958, plate 177.

[193] This is the Senior Warden's chair; the Junior Warden's chair is 6cm shorter, the Master's chair 61cm shorter. In 1796 the latter may have been either the same size or taller still. Domestic chairs of the period tend to be between 90 and 100 cm tall.

[194] That at Tarbolton is exceptional.

Depute Master's and Immediate Past Master's chairs 174 centimetres tall. The open framework of the backs resembles the Dunfermline chairs whilst an architectonic theme is again suggested, in this case, however, incorporating gothic detailing. The black painted finish is not original although the gold-painted detailing follows a previous, and it is claimed, the original pattern.[195] The chairs for the Wardens and those either side of the Master closely resemble one another, excepting paintwork details and height. The seat level of the latter is 11centimetres less. The gothic finials of these chairs are replaced by lotus bud examples on the Master's chair which may be intended to suggest the 'chapiters' of Jachin and Boaz. The Master's chair is the only one with arms and in place of the single simple wooden emblems affixed to the other chairs are several, possibly made from papier maché. In addition to the square, compasses and 24 inch gauge, all within a cartouche, are the all-seeing eye of God and the sun, moon and stars. The scroll below bears the motto of the Grand Lodge of Scotland: *In the Lord is All our Trust.* Mottoes in this vein were fairly common among trade incorporations: the Aberdeen Tailors, for example, used the words *In God is our Trust.*

Somewhat less extreme is the Master's chair of the Keith Lodge, Peterhead, made in 1808, Catalogue 19. The chair displays a combination of fashionable and vernacular characteristics. The tablet top-rail and turned arm supports are taken from fashionable chairs in the Grecian style. The incised lines along the stiles and lower back rail, as well as those bordering the top rail, imitate the reeding which was often a feature of genteel furniture at this time. Rhomboid-sectioned legs taper along the three inside edges, a characteristically vernacular interpretation of the tapered square leg[196], and stretchers are used (although inevitably given the height). The focal point of the piece is the inlaid and inked emblems which would be obscured when the chair was actually in use. At the centre the square and compasses surround the letter G and along the top rail appear the sun, crescent moon and radiant eye within a triangle. At the base of the back a thin panel bears the incised and inked inscription: *KEITH LODGE No. 56. 1808.* The number '56' in the inscription has been replaced, presumably after 1826 when the lodge acquired that number on the roll of the Grand Lodge.[197] This is one of the earliest examples of an inscription bearing a lodge name and number. Such

[195] All Kirkcaldy Lodge's furniture was recently restored professionally.

[196] Legs of this kind are characteristic of the form of nineteenth century common chair which became known as 'Glasgow pattern'. Such characteristics can be found in chairs both common and genteel made as early as 1789 (see Jones 1987, catalogue 11) and are in effect as much a (regional) constructional as stylistic solution to the 'problem' of which, seat or leg, should predominate in determining the form of the other. The chair in Jones 1987, catalogue 11, interestingly dates from just after the appearance of tapered legs in pattern books (most significantly Hepplewhite in 1788). Items in this survey with similar legs include Catalogues 20-23, 33, 35, 36 and 42.

[197] It had been 41^2 until 1816 when it became 55, changing again in 1822 to 52.

inscriptions were widely employed as a decorative device during the nineteenth century and where several lodges met at the same premises declared which furniture belonged to which lodge. In the period before 1840, however, such sharing of premises was uncommon and the inscriptions on the chest of Lodge Leven St John and on the chairs of Peterhead and Kirkcaldy Lodges should all be read as awareness of a national masonic community, together with the assertion of local pride, in a context of ever-improving communications.[198]

Examples of the architectonic form so widely employed in England are rare in Scotland during this period. One such is the Master's chair of the Lodge of Journeymen Masons, Edinburgh, Catalogue 25. This is probably the chair made in 1816 which, together with a separate festooned crimson canopy, cost £15.[199] The lower half of the chair is plain yet the back, 202 centimetres high, is decorated with applied carvings in a neo-classical style: the square and compasses hang from a chain enclosed by a floral swag while above there is a line of rosettes. The crest is shaped in the familiar masonic form of an arch with keystone. In contrast to Catalogue 19, these decorations do not occupy space which is obscured when someone is seated in the chair. A pair of columns, carved in the round, front the stiles. There is a curious mixture here of Doric (the plain shafts together with the entablatures above) and Corinthian (the capitals). Upon each entablature sits a globe terminal. Regrettably the chair has been repainted several times and much of the finer detail is lost. There were once gilt representations of the sun, moon and seven stars[200] and lines of latitude and longitude are visible beneath the flaking paint which covers the right hand globe.[201] Inspiration may have come from Sheraton's designs of 1803 or, closer to home, the Deacon's chair of the Wrights and Masons' Incorporation yet the resemblances are slight.

The only other architectonic chair surveyed was Catalogue 26 made by George Kemp in payment for his entry into Edinburgh St Andrew's Lodge.[202] It is a relatively modest 169 centimetres high and, although Kemp had been trained as a worker in wood, the Ionic capitals may have been taken from another piece of furniture or a model of the classical Orders. The appearance of the chair has altered since it was described by Thomas Bonnar in 1892.[203] A figure of St Andrew with his cross once

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[198] The chairs made for Lodge Perth and Scoon in 1831 may likewise be read in this way. See below, p.58.
[199] Seggie & Turnbull 1930, p.91.
[200] Seggie & Turnbull 1930, p.91.
[201] These lines can also be seen in photographs of *c.*1900 and *c.*1930. The chair is perhaps restorable.
[202] The chair is now in the collection of the Grand Lodge of Scotland.
[203] Bonnar 1892, p.138-9. A photograph in the collection at Freemasons' Hall corroborates the description.

surmounted the pediment while the three thin bars which are fixed between the 'entablature' and lower stay rail held an assortment of fret-cut emblems: square, compasses, level and two 24 inch rulers arranged to form a saltire cross. The apron affixed behind glass at the back of the chair is presumed to have belonged to Kemp and added in 1844 when he accidentally drowned: the three black rosettes are signs of mourning. The squab cushion is probably original, the seat underneath being roughly finished. Although the chair is not an accomplished piece of work, the use of pedimented facade structure is unique for the period.

That Kemp, a man with a passion for genuine gothic architecture, designed this, in respect of the form, the most classical of Scottish masonic chairs is not, in fact, so surprising. The classicism of the Journeymen Masons' chair is decorative while that here is architectural. Kemp respected above all solid building and fine masonry work. In a letter to his brother, written in London on 20 February 1825, he compared the shoddy whitewashed brick of Regent Street with the chaste stone of the Edinburgh new town:

> if you will allow me a similie, the one here is like an old matron gorgeously decorated with a profusion of sackcloth flummery, and the other like an elegant girl in a plain dress of silk

and continued, in his slighting of English pretensions to artistic superiority,

> there are some pieces in Roslin Chapel and many things in Melrose Abbey that would not escape admiration in the Elgin Gallery, that repository of plunder from the Parthenon at Athens.[204]

Probably dating from around 1825, and 177 centimetres tall, is the Senior Warden's chair of Robertson's Lodge, Cromarty. (Catalogue 27.) Roughly contemporary with it is an even taller chair (199 centimetres), Catalogue 28, possibly made for the Cromarty United Free Gardeners, which is today used as a Junior Warden's chair at Robertson's Lodge. If the level which features as part of the back-splat of the former is to be taken as the emblem of the Senior Warden, the Lodge has clearly lost Master's and Junior Warden's chairs. It is possible, however, that this was the original Master's chair: the appropriate square and compasses are inlaid into the top rail while a level, usually the emblem of the Senior Warden, appears prominently on the Biggar Master's chair. In general the chair is 'Grecian' in form with dropped arms supported

[204] Bonnar 1892, pp.35-36. In the same letter he writes: *To be sure there are many improvements designed on the orders along Regent Street, if adding an additional nose or limb to a fine statue would be an improvement.*

by balusters and a concave tablet top rail, its central section raised as in several of the designs in Sheraton's *Drawing Book.* As with the previous examples, however, the seat is raised high from the ground and the back extended beyond the height normal for domestic chairs. The foot-rests presently attached to the chairs were added comparatively recently although the stretchers are original. The second chair differs enough to indicate that even if made by the same hand it was a separate commission. The back design recalls no masonic emblems.[205] Such enormity was, of course, a common feature of masonic Master's chairs in England by this time while the large, almost sculptural, level which is such a striking feature of the first chair is also paralleled in English examples including that in Figure 62, which dates from before 1843.[206]

Three early nineteenth century examples of officers' chairs on a domestic scale, Catalogues 20, 21 and 35, illustrate well the vernacular characteristics shared by genteel and common furniture in Scotland. In contrast to the fashionable manufactures of England during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Scottish genteel furniture tended to maintain a link with vernacular forms. This is shown, for example in the set of chairs made by George Sandeman for his daughter in 1789 which are genteel adaptations of the 'brander back' form.[207] This same form is implied in the chairs made by Cunningham for Kilwinning Lodge in 1809. At 102.5 centimetres in height these chairs do not appear to have been made with much regard for the specification that they be *of a higher Elevation than Ordinary.*[208] That the chairs in Catalogue 20 are the chairs made by Cunningham, however, cannot be doubted since no other officers' chairs were ordered during the period, a period from which they so clearly date. The central raised tablet might have come, with the slender arms, from Hepplewhite's *Guide* or Sheraton's *Drawing Book* but the formula of square back with slats, together with legs tapered along three edges, was already part of the Scottish vernacular tradition.

Comparable with Cunningham's chairs are the Wardens' chairs of Canongate Kilwinning Lodge and what is probably a somewhat later piece made in Coupar Angus (Catalogue 35). The former incorporates similarly tapered, if somewhat thicker, legs although the legs of the latter are simply square in section. The

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[205] Although the resemblance to a ram's head has prompted the suggestion that it was made for a Shepherds friendly society lodge, there was no such lodge in Cromarty during the 1820s and 1830s.

[206] It is now the property of Lodge Benevolence, Bideford, having been obtained form the Lodge Loyal, Barnstaple. Rose 1949, p.115. Two Warden's chairs made in 1858 for the Lodge of Unanimity and Sincerity, Taunton, are surmounted by similar oversized wooden emblems. Jones 1956, plate XV.

[207] These are the chairs referred to in note 186, above, catalogue 11 in Jones 1987.

[208] See above, p.43. I have not been able to examine the third, probably Junior Warden's, chair and have not been able to ascertain whether it still exists.

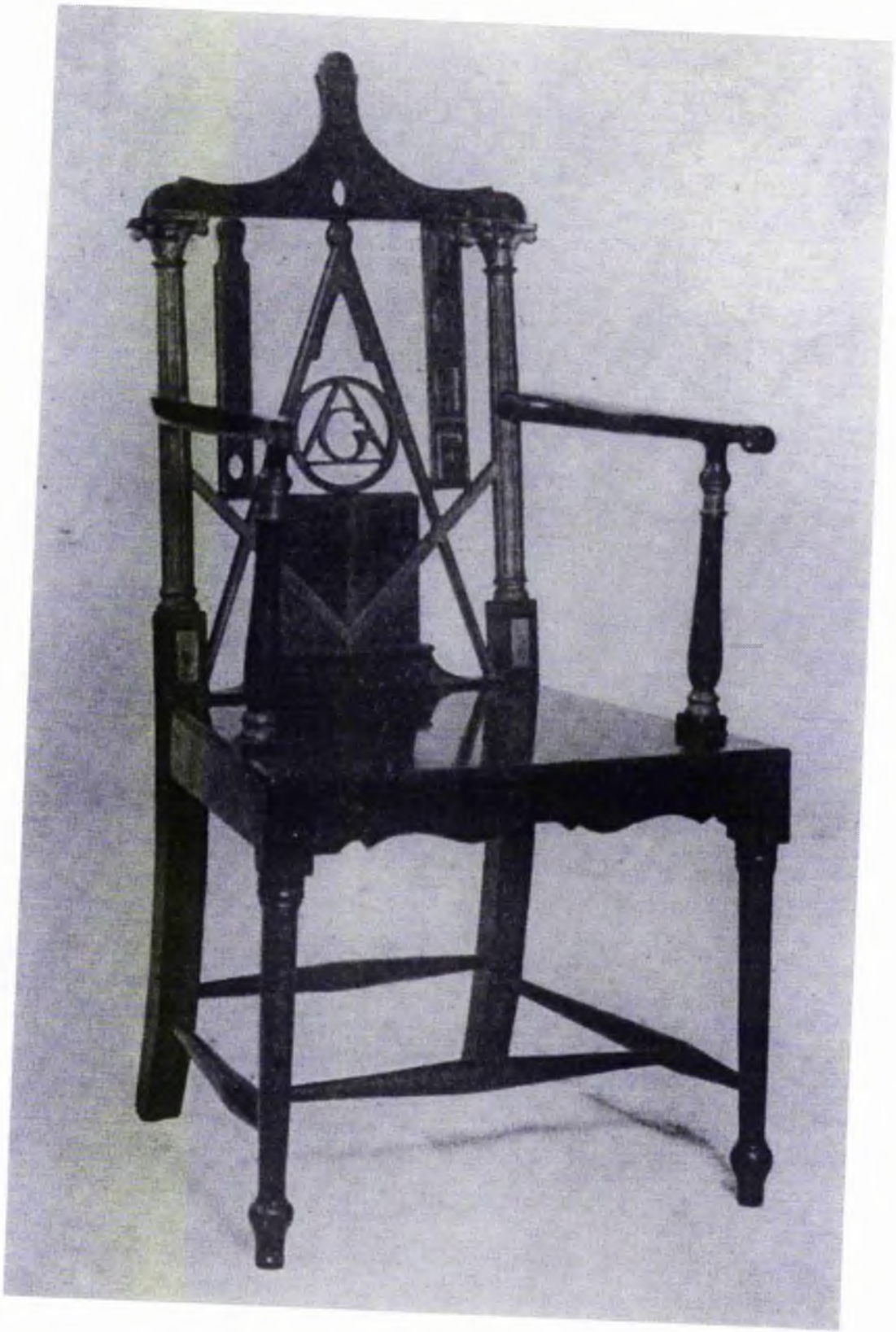

Figure 62

Master's chair, Lodge Benevolence, Bideford,
before 1843.
(Oliver 1944)

horizontally curving arms are a vernacular feature of both although the Coupar Angus Master's chair has rather more fashionable sloping supports. The backs of the Canongate chairs were probably made to match the Master's chair. That of the Coupar Angus example is surely related to the 'brander' form although the slats occupy only half the area and connect directly to the batten which covers the rear seat rail. The central raised section of the top rail of this latter chair imitates pattern book pieces yet is set between the protruding stiles in a vernacular manner. The shape of the arms and their supports together with the brander back structure are directly comparable to the Perth Shoemakers' chair, Figure 45. The seat of the latter is raised high from the ground, however, and the fine carving contrasts with the painted decoration on the Coupar Angus chair. Much of this paintwork would appear to have been stencilled and probably dates from the later nineteenth century. The splats of the Canongate chairs are painted with columns and, on the bosses, tools: Corinthian and square for one (probably the Senior Warden), Doric and plumb-line for the other (probably the Junior Warden). The Kilwinning chairs also use officers' emblems: painted tools and back slats carved in the form of classical columns.[209] The Master's chair's top-rail tablet is decorated with square and compasses, eye, sun, moon and stars, level and plumb-line, the Senior Warden's with simply a square. The slats are fluted and plain respectively although there are no capitals as such. This Kilwinning trio would appear to be the earliest surviving differentiated trio of officers chairs from Scotland as well as the earliest example of the use of the classical Orders to achieve, in part, such differentiation.

The chairs given by Thomas Ower to the Lodge Scoon and Perth in 1831, Catalogues 29 and 30 are not much larger than domestic examples and while not notably forthright in their use of gothic motifs could easily have been inspired by the designs of A. W. Pugin and others published in Ackermann's *Repository of Arts* during the period 1809 to 1828. In spite of the difference in style the gothic chairs and the eight other officer's chairs, Catalogue 31, are clearly related. The style of the square and compasses on the three gothic chairs does not quite match that on the others but they all are given unpainted, applied wooden emblems together with the 'logo' *No. 3* on the Master's chair and the eight lesser officer's chairs. All except the Master's chair have a small round indentation at the centre front of the seat which would once have held a cushion fastened at the rear with a ribbon. Not including the unspecified *improvements* taking place at Canongate Kilwinning, these chairs are the only furniture firmly datable to the 1830s, '40s or '50s that it has been possible to uncover. Although an altar made for the Lodge Operative of Dunkeld (Catalogue 80) might be added, the material evidence

[209] These slats are semi-circular in section.

only adds to the impression gained from documentary sources that freemasonry underwent a severe decline in the mid-nineteenth century.

Considering the masonic officer's chair from 1735 to 1831 it is clear that regardless of the medium in which emblems appear not all were current at all times. Tools, in particular the square and compasses, are present throughout, following the example set by trade incorporation property. Very occasionally the compasses appeared alone as in the original form of the Master's chair at Biggar. This would be in accordance with the heraldic arms of masons' guilds yet the towers, seen in some English examples (Figures 5 and 21) were never introduced. The masonic significance of the configuration did not prevent it from becoming the standard public symbol for freemasonry appearing, for example, above the doors of masonic halls. At times the arrangement of compass points and square has varied, a 'one leg under, one leg over' configuration often being popular. Dating items on the basis of these arrangements, however, as is sometimes attempted by freemasons, will not give convincing results: such configurations were never employed with any consistency. Although the identification of the Wardens with a level and a plumb-rule was established in Scotland, chairs for Wardens decorated with emblems were rare before 1800 outside of Edinburgh and in two of the surveyed examples, at Kilwinning and at Canongate Kilwinning, the Senior Warden is given the square as an emblem. The symbols of sun, moon and stars were not common on furniture, either in England or in Scotland, until the 1790s. The first examples in this survey appear on the cresting of the Master's chair at Biggar. Thereafter these motifs were used at Peterhead, Kilwinning, Kirkcaldy, Coupar Angus and by George Kemp.[210] On Master's chairs the all-seeing eye of God is found always in combination with sun, moon and stars and no chair with these emblems is without the eye.[211]

Of architectural motifs careful distinctions must be drawn. Columnar stiles, or two columns/pillars, were in use in London and Coventry in around 1760 and appear thereafter at Exeter, Bath and several other English lodges. They are implied in Stevenson's chair for Inveraray Lodge while the double twisted stiles of the Biggar Master's chair are incongruously topped with Ionic capitals and entablatures. Columns are unequivocally present, however, in fluted form, in Huttons's Dunfermline chairs. Thereafter they were used regularly in Scotland into the twentieth century although the implied variety were also still seen, as at Kirkcaldy. Three columns together are rarer, found only at Dunfermline and Kilwinning. The motif was presumably suggested by the common use during the 1790s and thereafter of three upright slats on chairbacks.

[210] With few exceptions they disappeared from chairs made after 1840.
[211] After 1840 it continued on its own in common use, however.

The chairs at Kilwinning are unique in combining three columns with the use of classical Orders to indicate the officer who occupies the chair. This use of the Orders, however, is also found in the Canongate Kilwinning Wardens' chairs. Their use in this way was established in England during the mid-eighteenth century and, as with the columnar motif in general, came to Scotland belatedly from England. Again the practice in Scotland, for reasons of economy, of commissioning only Master's chairs accounts for this. It is probable that in both countries the device of the three Orders was employed far more commonly for candlesticks. The use of carved capitals was very rare in Scotland being seen in only three chairs made before 1840, all Master's chairs: those at Biggar, the Lodge of Edinburgh Journeymen and St Andrew's Lodge, Edinburgh. The choice of Corinthian order in each case contrasts with the later convention of Ionic for Master's chairs. At Biggar there is in fact a visible contradiction between the two parts of the chair.

The inclusion of a pediment to complete the architectural motif, moral or analogy is extremely rare. Although the Deacon of the Edinburgh Wrights and Masons sat in such a chair no freemason appears to have adopted the from until Kemp in 1827. The form does not feature very often in English chairs either, however, examples including those in Figures 5 and 51. The use of globes is similarly rare, particularly in comparison with their frequent appearance in England. They were included only at the Edinburgh Journeymen's Lodge and at Biggar (although in an anomalous position and quite when it is difficult to say).[212] Spheres implying globes are probably intended in cases where the stiles are, or imply, columns. It is difficult not to see a column where there is a sphere and a globe where there is a 'column'. Nevertheless, while it is important to remember that the form is a common one in furniture, such hidden meaning was likely to be irresistible to freemasons. Chairs, therefore, which might be considered to fall into this category of implied column and globe are those from Dunfermline and Kirkcaldy.

In general during the period there appears to have been an increasing awareness of the possibilities for symbolic content, not simply applied to the surface but as part of the form of the officer's chair. The poverty of Scottish lodges, relative to those in England, ensured that these possibilities were realised far less frequently than was the case south of the border. The earliest furniture in masonic use was nevertheless not neutral in so far as the very existence of a chest, once a lodge had become separated from an incorporation, proclaimed the existence of the lodge and chairs for officers were usually larger than any used in a domestic context. Increasingly, quasi-heraldic

[212] They were far from common after 1840. One example is Catalogue 38.

decoration analogous to that used by trade incorporations was employed. This was supplemented with esoteric references which trade incorporation furniture could not possess and this esoteric meaning could be enhanced by locating the symbolism within the frame of the chair, the hidden content hidden twice over. In this respect the more genteel the setting and furniture, the more sophisticated was the symbolism. No minute book would appear to record furniture being hidden from view when halls were used for non-masonic purposes, however. Rather, the initiate could no doubt take special pleasure in contemplating his comprehension of the symbolic content.

A further contrast with much of the English material is the reluctance of Scottish freemasons during the period to apply emblems indiscriminately in a purely decorative manner. Moreover, fewer emblems from the common repertoire were employed. Scottish freemasons knew of emblems such as the beehive, Jacob's ladder, Noah's ark and so on but restricted their appearance to painted and printed materials, for example Figure 9. There are only two examples of inscriptions, upon the Master's chairs at Peterhead and Kirkcaldy. Nowhere are quotations from the Bible to be seen, still less quotations from Horace. Erudite idiosyncratic touches such as the crocodile upon the chair of the Old Union Lodge in London are never attempted. Nor, of course, did the Prince of Wales' Ostrich feathers (Figures 18-20 and 35) become an element in Scottish masonic chair design, the Grand Lodge structures of each country remaining separate to the present day. It may be significant that Thomas Sheraton's designs for Grand masonic furniture appear to have had no influence in Scotland. The *Cabinet Dictionary* had subscribers in Scotland and although the designs would not have been familiar to provincial wrights, they would probably have been known to urban entrepreneurs like John Burke of St Andrew Square. Certainly Braidwood, the probable makers of the Goldsmiths' boardroom furniture, worked in the manner of Sheraton.

The sophistication in conventional terms of the chairs surveyed would appear to correspond roughly with the status of the community in which they were made. The plain and inexpensive chairs of rural Ayrshire can be contrasted with the fashion-conscious yet economical products from thriving towns such as Cromarty and Peterhead. These in turn appear basic and vernacular alongside the chairs of Perth or the trio of chairs made for the Lodge of Kilwinning. This range of quality and pretension is, to an extent, paralleled in the trade incorporation Deacon's chairs. At Perth the genteel chair of the Deacon of Wrights contrasts with the vernacular chair of the Shoemakers' Deacon. None of the furniture surveyed matches the grandest English material, however, and the rather functional Wardens' chairs of the Lodge

Canongate Kilwinning are particularly surprising given the elevated social status of many of its *habitués.*

A further surprise is the fashionable, high-quality work of Stevenson, who had probably been trained in Glasgow and may possibly have worked for the Dukes of Argyll. His work was not as fashionable as it could have been, however: the rococo cartouche which bears the square and compasses emblem would have been popular in Glasgow a decade previously[213] but would have a made a poor showing in the neo-classical interiors of Inveraray castle and alongside the sofas and *fauteuils en cabriolet* being made there by the Edinburgh cabinet-makers Peter and Douglas Traill.[214] Had his work been in their class his chair might have resembled Fleming's made two years previously. (Figure 2.) The architectural theme of egg and dart moulded arch supported by pilasters was presumably chosen for its masonic relevance. The chair is otherwise of the broad Louis XV style employed in Britain for upholstered 'French' chairs from 1750 and well into the 1770s when it was gradually superseded by Adam-inspired chairs in a Louis XVI style. Slender cabriole legs *were* still to be seen alongside fluted cylindrical or tapered square legs in the first edition of Hepplewhite's *Guide* in 1788 (plate 13 is comparable to Stevenson's chair in this respect) but were purged from the 1794 edition.

Stevenson was also unusual among the makers of masonic furniture in Scotland during this period for having clearly been a chairmaker, trained in wood-carving rather than joinery as were most of the wrights who supplied the demand for seating at other lodges and more generally in many parts of Scotland. The exceptions to this 'rule' were the fashionable cities including Perth where the Wrights' Incorporation, or perhaps the freemasons, commissioned a chair which was clearly made by a chair-maker in the London sense of the term. Most, however, were made by general wrights using very few turned and no carved components together with cabinet-maker's joints. The use of inlay in several instances (Peterhead, Cromarty and the mid-eighteenth century trades chairs of Old Aberdeen) is further evidence of cabinet-making skills applied to the decoration of seat furniture in place of carving. Although carving declined rapidly in fashionable chairmaking after 1770 it never completely disappeared: the Edinburgh Journeymen's Master's chair is decorated with applied carving. Few of the provincial chairs, however, went much beyond fret-sawn decoration or 'cut outs' of the sort seen in Catalogue 27 and the use of painted

[213] The furnishings of the Lodge of Glasgow have not survived. Might Stevenson have been inspired by them?
[214] Lindsay & Cosh 1973, p.219.

decoration on many, as well as on other categories of masonic furniture, is evidence of limited finances.

CANOPIES

While the chairs used by Dalkeith Lodge, like their accompanying pedestals (Catalogue 75), are plain and rudimentary in construction, the Master of the Lodge had the distinction of sitting beneath a canopy, Figure 63, as at St John's Chapel off the Canongate in Edinburgh. Both of these canopies predate the earliest known English example (1788) although given the low survival rate for eighteenth century masonic lodge interiors it would be rash to claim that the idea was current in Scotland before it was so in England. The hexagonal Dalkeith canopy (1764) resembles a pulpit sounding board and at some time has supported a tester or curtain. At the apex of the ogival roof is a three dimensional representation of the dove sent by Noah (with a branch in its beak), an emblem of good fortune and probably a later addition. The words *DALKEITH KILWINNING LODGE* in gold paint are also later as are the spherical lamps. Behind, the wall is hollowed out as a niche and either side are plaster pilasters surmounted by urns. The ensemble is the neo-classical equivalent of the arrangement at Canongate Kilwinning and was surely modelled upon a church pulpit.

Comparisons can be made with many such eighteenth century pulpits including, for example, those at St Quivox, Ayrshire, or St Nicholas West, Aberdeen. The former has a flat polygonal sounding board supported on fluted pilasters, the latter, designed by James Gibbs in 1755, an elaborately enriched sounding board with ogival roof supported on semi-circular Corinthian columns.[215] These did not contain seating, of course, and are enclosed within panelling. The resemblance is nevertheless a striking reminder of the pretensions of the craft whose Master dispensed the 'Word'. This might be literally so if meetings included readings from the Bible although disputation upon Scripture was strictly forbidden within lodge walls. The minute book for the period 1757-63 of the now extinct lodge of St John, Thurso, records in its first entry the need for repairs and refurbishment. Among other items, a Master's chair with gilded emblems was purchased and placed within an arched recess *to serve as a canopy over the Master.*[216] The arrangement may thus have been analogous to that at Dalkeith. A fourth example of this form of canopy still exists at Biggar, erected in 1805 at a cost of 1s. 6d.[217] (Figure 64.) The effect is largely achieved with drapery

[215] Both are illustrated in Hay 1956, plate XI.
[216] Ryrie 1967, p.91. The Lodge flourished between 1741 and 1812 but lost members thereafter to the newly-formed St Peter's Operative Lodge which had established a benefit fund. St John's Lodge had been in the control of local merchants. The chair does not appear to have survived.
[217] Jones 1987, catalogue 13.

Figure 63

Canopy, Lodge Dalkeith Kilwinning, 1764.

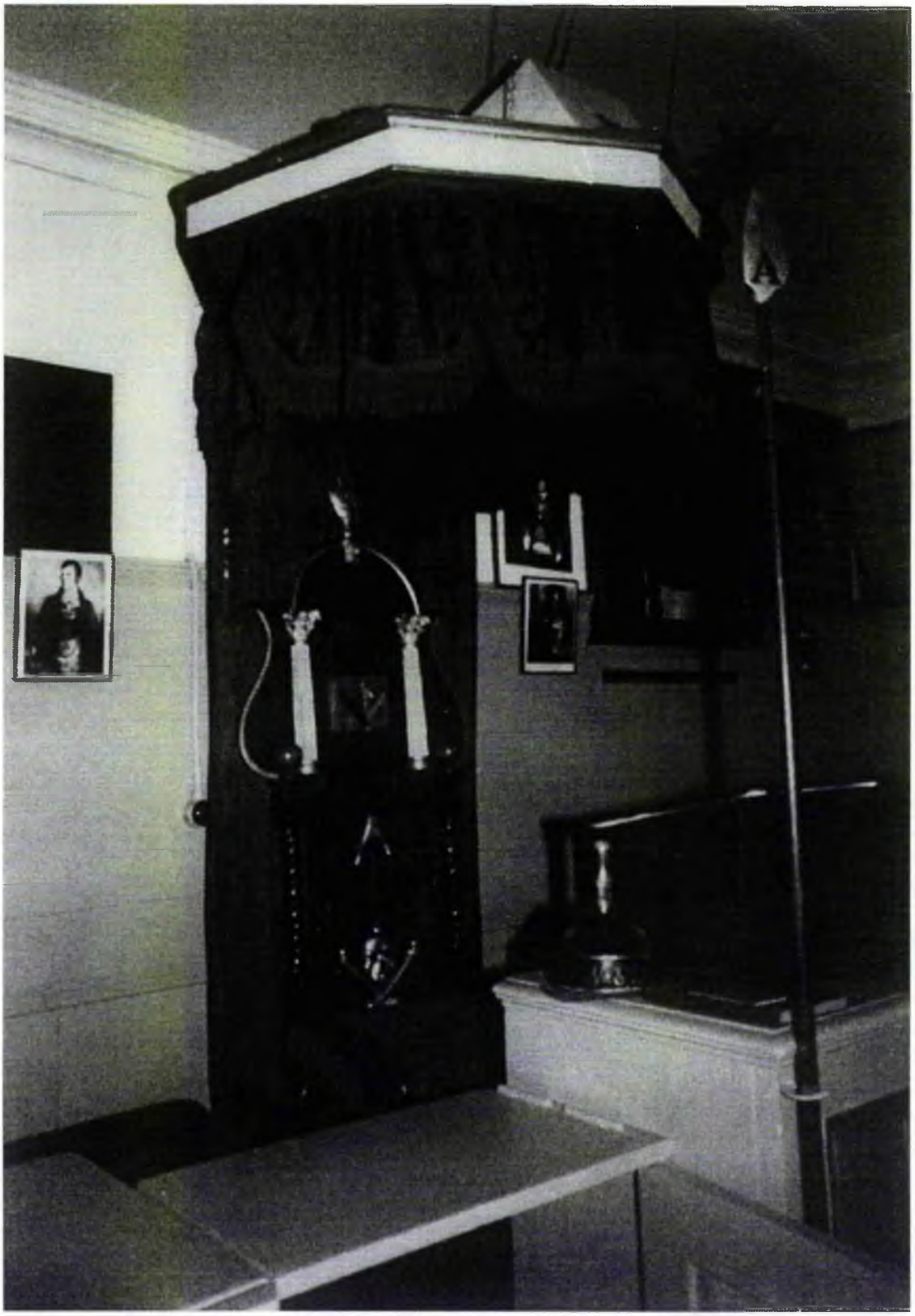

Figure 64

Canopy, Biggar Free Operative Lodge, 1805.

against the wall behind the Master's chair and a tester around the hexagonal canopy board. This drapery has been replaced probably several times. On 21 November 1844 it was recorded in the minutes of the Lodge that *the hangings which adorned our Ancient Chair for nearly half a century* [sic] *are now a deformity more than an ornament* and that the Master, Secretary and Treasurer would see to having replacements *executed in a proper harmone style.*[218] Uniquely, however, the raised east end is enclosed behind panelling (the date of which is unknown). Thus the arrangement suggests both the pulpit and box pews. Reinforcing this impression of a quasi-Christian setting is the fact that integral canopies of the sort sometimes seen in England are never part of Scottish Master's chairs.

PEDESTALS

Pedestal furniture bears very little comparison with any domestic form and would appear to have replaced ordinary tables in the first lodges.[219] Of the pedestals at Dalkeith Lodge two of the three have lost their painted emblems and were embellished around 1980 with discarded 'working tools', the name given to the real tools or representations thereof used in initiations. Thus the Master's pedestal, Catalogue 75, gives the best impression of what these objects looked like. The use of emblems, including the letter G, contrasts with the plain chairs. Of a similarly tall, tapering form are the two Wardens' pedestals, Catalogue 76, of Lodge St Andrew, Perth (founded 1758). Dating these is difficult although pedestals appear to have become broader and shorter during the nineteenth century. Often with drawers, later pedestals resemble cabinets not plinths, and are perhaps best compared with teacher's desks or lecterns. The Perth pair are painted with representations of level, Corinthian column and meridian sun on one, plumb-rule, Doric column and setting sun on the other. It is rare for the moving sun motif to appear in Scotland and the relationship between tool, architectural Order and the position of the sun would appear to be confused. Either the usual arrangement of level and plumb-rule was here reversed or the idea of the passage of the sun not properly understood. The arrangement of the Orders appears to be in harmony with that of the sun motif and yet the evidence of the Wardens' chairs at Canongate Kilwinning Lodge supports a plumb-rule/Doric Order coupling for the Junior Warden. Ultimately the contradictions are not resolvable. The chairs at the Lodge are incised with emblems exactly resembling the paintings on the pedestals. The

[218] I am grateful to Wilfred Welson for this quotation from a minute book in the possession of the Biggar Free Operative Lodge.

[219] See Stornoway Lodge inventory above, p.17. Eighteenth century prints of French lodge interiors also show tables rather than pedestals. See, for example, Curl 1991, figures 14-20.

chairs, however, do not appear to be earlier than mid-nineteenth century which raises the possibility that the emblems were added to the pedestals.

The same juxtaposition of emblems is encountered in the Wardens' pedestals of the Lodge of Kirkcaldy, made in 1821. (Catalogue 77.) The resemblance is close and the two may derive from a common source. The form of the Kirkcaldy pedestals of very different, however: large and cubical with strongly articulated pilasters and fielded panels. A massive bench, Catalogue 78, for the Master, Depute Master and Immediate Past Master was added in 1823 together with a similar one for the Secretary and Treasurer.[220] Each officer is represented by inlaid boxwood emblems with inked decorative details, the Master, for example, by square, compasses and 24 inch gauge together with a crescent moon, maul and flower, this latter perhaps a metaphorical sun. There is no attempt to connect the Master with Ionic Order or the rising sun, at least not directly. Other officers are given conventional emblems while an altar, Catalogue 79, presumably contemporary with the rest of the pedestal furniture, has a similar inlaid emblem. It is tempting to regard these two sets of Wardens' pedestals as adopting the English device of the diurnal passage of the sun in ignorance of its signification. Moreover, the use of the square on what are probably Senior Wardens' chairs, at Canongate Kilwinning and Mother Kilwinning, in each case with a different Order, further suggests that no single emblematic system was consistently used even after 1800.

FLOORING AND LIGHTING

From the middle of the eighteenth century several lodges can be seen abandoning the practice of chalking on the floor designs appropriate to each initiation degree and using painted floor cloths instead. The Grand Lodge rebuked St Andrews Lodge in 1759 for this, presumably as a potential danger to masonic secrecy. Nevertheless the Lodge at Kelso had procured a set of cloths from Edinburgh in 1756 while a year later the Lodge at Thurso sent to Leith for the same articles.[221] That St John's Lodge, Inveraray, also used painted floor cloths is indicated by the entry in the minute book

[220] I am grateful to Andrew Haggart for this information. No maker or price are recorded although it is certainly possible that the pedestal furniture came from Barnet's workshop.

[221] Rose 1951, p.101 & Ryrie 1967, p.91. Floor cloth, 'oiled cloth' or 'oilcloth' was coarse canvas made impervious by repeated coatings of treacly paint and often given a decorative top coat of a geometric or tessellated pattern or in imitation of reed matting or turkey carpet. Available from the 1720s it was made in unusually large widths, frequently produced on the immense looms used for weaving sail cloth. Hence the location of production in Leith. From the 1860s floorcloth was gradually superseded by linoleum although by this time painted panels had replaced floor cloths in the masonic context. Gilbert, Lomax and Wells-Cole 1987, pp.101-105.

concerning the new chest[222] while an entry in the minutes of the Lodge Scoon and Perth for 27 October 1766 reads:

> Ebenezer Ferguson, Mason in Perth, who had been authorised by the lodge to make a flooring to the Lodge on waxcloth, with colours, produced the said cloath to the lodge, and they being well satisfied with the same, they appoint the Treasurer to pay him two guineas for his trouble and expenses.[223]

Fergusson was presumably painting on plain oil cloth purchased elsewhere. In 1804 the Lodge Ayr St Paul paid 2s. 10d. for *cloth for floorcloth.*[224] Judging by the price, this was probably simply a practical floor covering with perhaps a tessellated black and white design.[225] Kilwinning Lodge, by contrast, expended £6. 18s. 6d. on *three ffloor Cloths Painting* [sic] *with* [wooden?] *Mountings &c* in 1807. Carpets do not seem to have been in use before the mid-nineteenth century.

The torchères which were found in some eighteenth century English lodges did not become a feature of their Scottish counterparts. Candlesticks were placed either on the floor or, more likely, upon pedestals as is implied by an inventory of material acquired by the Holyrood House Lodge in 1782: there were *Four Lustres* for general lighting together with *Master & Wardens' Branches.*[226] This survey does not include such candlesticks, usually probably brass, but it is clear from both inventories and accounts that they were essential to a lodge interior. Generally, a purpose-built lodge room will admit no natural light and although the Canongate Kilwinning Lodge's Chapel of St John retained two windows, these were either shuttered or curtained during meetings.

There is a distinct contrast between the surviving 18th century material in Scotland and that south of the border. Not only was Scotland poorer than her southern neighbour but freemasonry either side of the border differed in its character and membership. Many Scottish lodges brought together men who were unlikely to have been freemasons in England and there may have been an unwillingness even at the most exclusive lodges to expend large sums on furnishings. The distinction should not be exaggerated: not every English lodge could afford the high quality ostentation visible at Bath and until a full survey is attempted in England it will remain difficult to assess

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[222] See above, p. 48.
[223] Smith 1898, p.132.
[224] Thomson 1905, appendix.
[225] In 1765 plain floor cloth cost around 1s. 9d. per yard in London and, in 1781, *Painted floor Cloth Green & White* 4s. 6d. per yard. Gilbert, Lomax & Wells-Cole 1987, p.101. No geometric patterned floor cloths from the eighteenth century survive in Britain although it is clear that they were made for a wide range of contexts.
[226] Lindsay 1935, vol.I, p.206.

the full range of furniture used. Fashionable urban makers did exist in Scotland, however, and high quality furniture was made for some of the trade incorporations at precisely the time when freemasonry entered upon a period of social decline and financial insecurity. In 1814 John Burke was to repair the tables of Canongate Kilwinning, provide it with two Wardens' chairs and to see to *sundry small jobs* all for less than £25. The following year the United Incorporation of Wrights and Masons expended £61 10s. 6d. upon chairs and tables. The neo-classical chair of the Edinburgh Journeymen Mason's Lodge (1816) does not compare with the lavish Convener's chair in the Glasgow Trades House (1819). The incorporations were far more public and they needed to display their wealth and authority. Lodges, by contrast, were potentially transitory: they came and went throughout the eighteenth century. The funds were those of a small club. At lodges which retained strong links with the building trades or were dominated by petty bourgeois tradesmen there was usually a desire to purchase premises and furnish them respectably but this was all.

CHAPTER 5

SCOTTISH MASONIC FURNITURE AFTER 1840

From the middle of the nineteenth century freemasonry in Scotland found an increasing number of adherents. Medium-sized towns would now have several lodges distinguished socially or geographically. Every lodge aspired to its own 'Temple' although in practice two of more might have to join together to build one. In the eyes of the brethren the masonic hall, possibly a free-standing structure proudly announcing its presence on the high street, joined the town hall, municipal buildings, library and museum as a yardstick of civic achievement. Some older lodges acquired premises for the first time.[227] The raising of walls led to a withdrawal from the streets. By 1900 masonic bazaars were more common than torchlight processions although the laying of foundation stones continued to cement masonic and civic bonds. The cultivation of a sober, middle-class self-identity can be read in both the activities and material culture of the craft including the many printed histories with their photographs of sturdy Masters in well-appointed lodge rooms.

The minimum furnishings for such a lodge room tended now to comprise a full suite of officer's chairs, matching or appropriate pedestals, desks for Secretary and Treasurer, an altar on which to place the Bible and a chequered carpet. Additional items included torchères in place of candlesticks, a small (often American) reed organ and possibly even a separate suite of furnishings for Royal Arch chapter meetings.[228] Mural decorations, paintings, framed photographs, even stained glass were popular As the lodge room was now regarded as at all times a temple, separate rooms for dining and committee meetings were required together with their own, more humble, furniture. Lastly, as bank accounts were opened, redundant cash boxes were filled with old aprons and sashes although a safe might be purchased in which to deposit deeds and minute books. Much of this could be obtained through the masonic suppliers, originally publishers or jewellers, who presumably contracted out furniture orders to large firms. (Figure 65.) This development may have arisen from the fact that lodges had fewer and fewer furniture making members. Most, however, appear to have preferred to engage local firms.

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[227] For reasons explained in the Preface, such lodges, founded before 1830, form the majority of those discussed in this chapter. The sort of furniture they bought, however, was the same as that purchased by the new lodges.

[228] Concerning Royal Arch freemasonry see below, p.78.

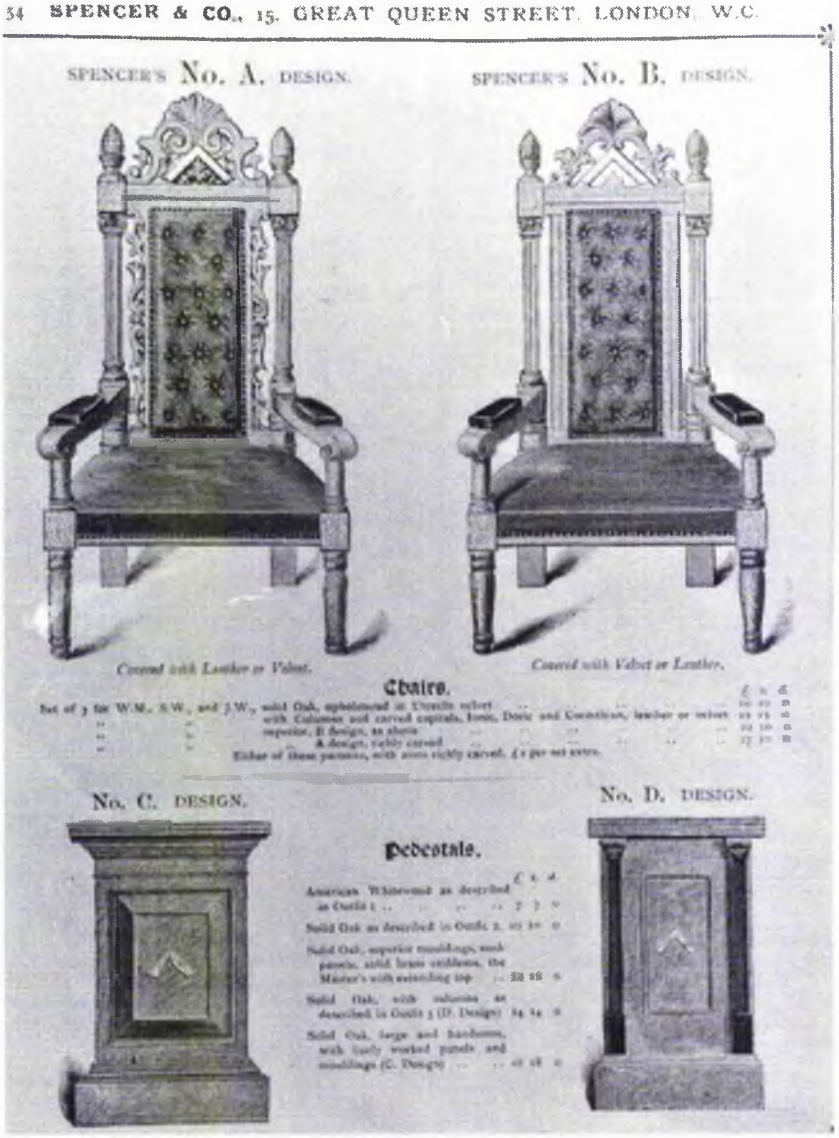

Figure 65

Page from Spencer's catalogue, *c.* 1900
(Spencer & Co. n.d.)

Not every lodge could afford or find room for every class of object and some still acquired gradually. Where this can be seen happening, however, it is evidence of a perception that further acquisitions were desirable. In 1867, for example the Keith Lodge of Peterhead commissioned from Thomson of Peterhead six chairs for its Wardens, Past and Depute Masters, Chaplain and Secretary at a total cost of £9. 5s. 6d.[229] In 1877 Deacon's chairs to a similar design, and probably by the same firm, were purchased and a Treasurer's chair was added in 1898 when the Secretary ceased to play that role. This set of chairs, Catalogues 36, 37 and 43, are important for certain vernacular characteristics which distinguish them from others discussed in this chapter: front legs which taper along the three inside edges, the curved profile of the stiles and rear legs (reminiscent of Grecian furniture from around 1810-1830) and the egg-turned arm supports. Extremely simple in conception, until 1941 they were not upholstered. Moreover, the largest, at 154.5 centimetres in height, might be seen as the last in the tradition of masonic chairs of great height. The rather gothic finials recall the set made in Kirkcaldy in 1815. Rarely after 1840 was the seat level of masonic chairs raised as far from the ground as here. Distinction was achieved in part by the use, if one includes the existing Master's chair, of four distinct sizes, the smallest without arms. The emblems are painted, something which by 1870 was also extremely rare.

The opposite extreme to the piecemeal activity at Peterhead was the sudden installation of an integrated interior in which every item was supplied by the same maker and a unified design concept employed. It is rare to find such interiors but one still exists at Dunblane. (Catalogues 49, 84 and 85.) The five officers chairs, three pedestals and altar are all *en suite*. Made of oak, as much masonic furniture was in the period, with carved emblems, they probably date from 1887 when the present premises were first occupied. Prominently carved upon the triangular crests of each chair and cut into the glass shades of the standard lamps affixed to the tops of the pedestals are the letters *D* and *IX* within stars, denoting the name and number of the Lodge. The glass shades which accompany the standard lamps affixed to each oak pedestal are decorated with sun, moon and stars as well as the identificatory initial and numeral. (The shade which went with the Master's lamp was probably similar but was at some time broken and replaced by a more conventional one of its type.) The altar is an enlarged version of the pedestals, the quarter-round twisted columns of the latter carved fully in the round and the panels given carved and gold painted inscriptions appropriate to Royal Arch

[229] It was in this same year that the benefit society functions of the Lodge were vested in a separate Keith Mason's Society, suggesting again the concurrence of constitutional change with furniture acquisition. Webster 1979, p.22.

freemasonry. (The Master' pedestal is given an intermediate treatment with mouldings glued to the panels and an ornamental brass base to the lamp.) The quality of the workmanship is high. Upholstery was almost always used for masonic chairs during the late nineteenth century and every chair at Dunblane is upholstered in green velvet. The altar cushions are of the same material, green being the 'Lodge colour' which would have reappeared with the name and number of the Lodge on the sashes worn by all brethren. Painted along the east wall in gold upon a field of green are the words *LODGE OF DUNBLANE No.IX.* The shouting forth of local pride in this way is common to several late nineteenth century lodge rooms.

In 1800 a masonic master's chair might have been designed with reference to other masonic chairs and fashionable pattern book designs as well as drawing less consciously upon the vernacular tradition in chair-making. By 1900 the position was very different. Virtually no makers worked in a vernacular style. One who did, William Wheeler of Arncroach, Fife, did so in a self-consciously revivalist manner. The chair in Figure 66 was sold, apparently for £5 5s., to the Lodge St Ayles, Anstruther, four miles (6.4 km) from Arncroach in around 1920.[230] It is similar to other *caqueteuse* reproductions made by the Wheeler workshop during the early decades of the twentieth century, ultimately deriving from the example in St Monans Council Chamber.[231] The *caqueteuse* form was, however, primarily perceived to be a historical style, albeit peculiarly Scottish. This was how it was understood by the two large firms, Scott Morton and Co., Edinburgh, and Wylie and Lochhead, Glasgow, which produced copies of the Dunnottar Castle chair, sold at auction in 1899 and published in *The Cabinet Maker* (Figure 67, upper right).[232]

Few masonic chairs of the period drew simply upon standard domestic types although many were inevitably informed by main-stream trends, in particular, historicised reproduction styles. Chairs which are notably domestic in scale and style, however, include those made for the Lodge of Falkirk, Catalogues 45 and 46, which display a familiarity with Eastlake's *Hints on Household Taste*, and those from St Vigean's Lodge, Arbroath, Catalogues 59-62, which are unmistakably progressive in form and somewhat in the manner of J. S. Henry. This is less clear in the St Vigean's Master's chair, encumbered with its scrolled crest, columnar stiles and turned front legs, than in the simpler Warden's chairs with the 'quaint' bowed profile of the uprights, a concave front seat rail which accentuates the trapezoidal seat, bulging upholstered arms and a

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[230] Photograph of *c.*1990 in the Library of the Grand Lodge of Scotland. It has not been possible to examine the chair or verify the price of £5 5s., added to the negative of the photograph of *c.*1920, Figure 66, now among the East Brothers of Lochee papers, Dundee City Archives, GD/MUS 112/3/1.

[231] See Macbeth 1991.

[232] *Cabinet Maker*, January 1899, p.180.

Figure 66

William Wheeler. Master's chair, Lodge St Ayles, Anstruther, *c.*1920. Photograph, East Brothers of Lochee Papers, Dundee City Archives. (Macbeth 1991)

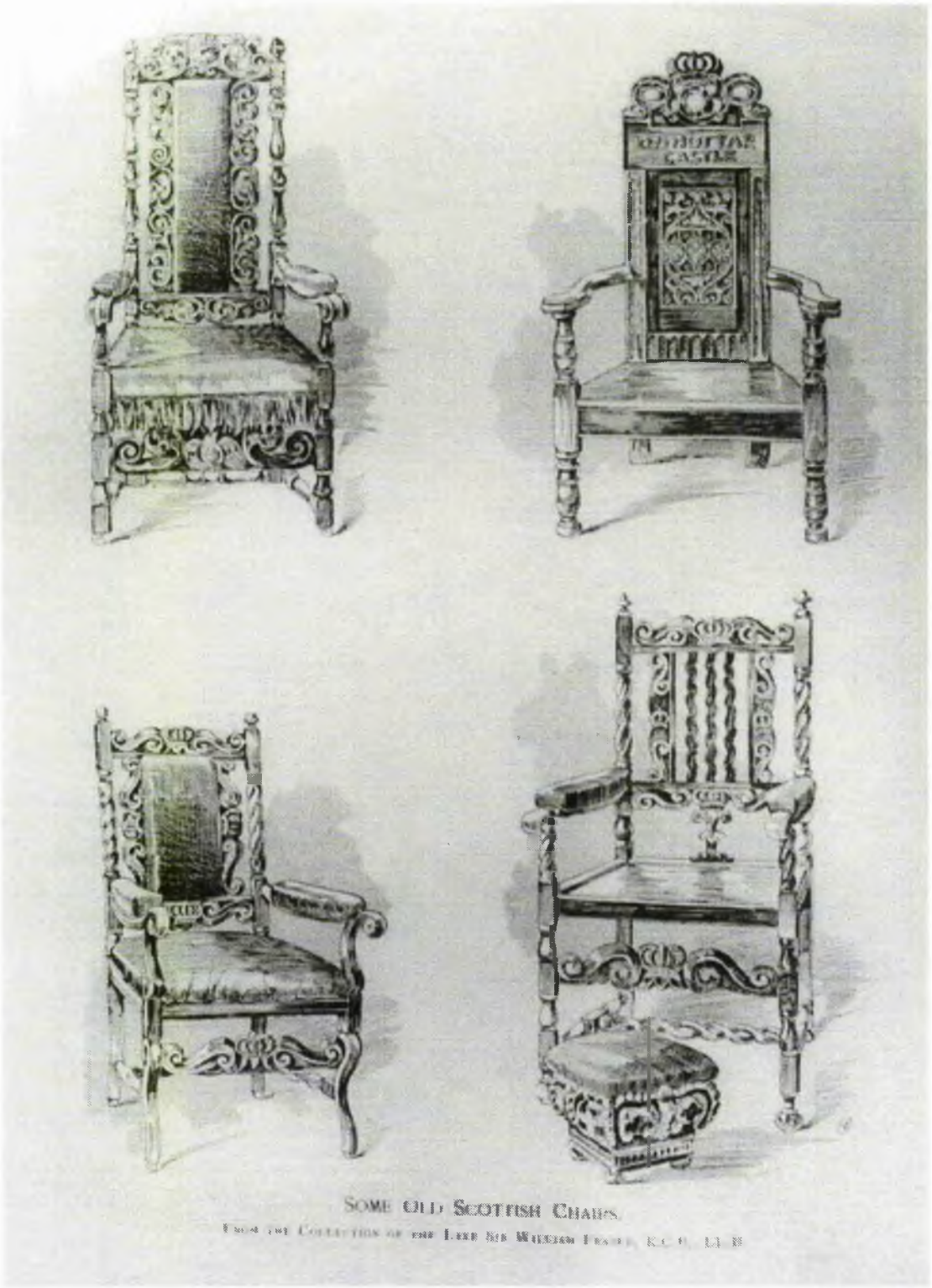

Figure 67

" Some old Scottish Chairs. From the Collection of the Late Sir William Fraser."
(*The Cabinet Maker* January 1899)

short stumpy back set well back from the front of the chair. The emblems on all the chairs other than the that of Master are scarcely noticeable.

An alternative was an institutional model, perhaps that of the town hall. A large number of these were being built at this time in one of the many forms of gothic, although the furniture within these buildings was less frequently arched and pinnacled. Gothic masonic items are rare not least because of freemasonry's association with classical architecture. Furniture which can be described as neo-classical or inspired by classical architectural forms was rarer still, however, and the growth of interest in freemasonry's medieval pre-history could join forces with the praise of Britain's gothic heritage. The annual day outing of the English Quatuor Coronati Lodge of Research, an account of which always appeared in its journal, published annually from 1886, would typically begin at the gothic cathedral or ruined abbey of its host city and careful records were made of the medieval stonemasons' marks. In Scotland, not only had Walter Scott been a freemason but his monument was designed by the freemason George Kemp and paid for in part by subscriptions from masonic lodges.[233] Among gothic masonic furniture are a trio of chairs bearing the date 1892 made for the Prince's Lodge, Glasgow, Catalogues 50 and 51, and similarly bulky Wardens' chairs with matching pedestals at Dumbarton Kilwinning St John's Lodge, Catalogues 52 and 87. Both sets derive ultimately from the Coronation Chair in Westminster Abbey. The Lodge of Stirling procured its present gothic Master and Warden's chairs from a church.[234]

There was also, however, a third option, no less historicised: the category of the ceremonial or commemorative chair. A distinct concept of the ceremonial chair or chair of state had always existed yet from around 1880 new interest seems to have been shown in actually making as well as designing such pieces. Various commissions were reported in *The Cabinet Maker*. In 1881 the editor of this journal felt the need to *complement the Greenwich Liberals upon the good taste displayed in the selection of a chair* for presentation to the Prime Minister, Gladstone. The *well-rendered symbolism to be found on the top panel of the back* was explained in detail and the claim made that *this idea of presenting chairs to public men must be growing*.[235] This was wishful thinking perhaps and yet not entirely an unfounded assessment. Ornate chairs presented to great men were accompanied in the pages of *The Cabinet Maker* by the

[233] The Grand Master laid the foundation stone. See above, p.10.
[234] I owe this information to David Jones.
[235] *Cabinet Maker*, September 1881, pp.42-3.

chairs lesser individuals had presented to institutions (as memorials to themselves).[236] There was no consistent favouring of any particular style and the degree to which patrons were flexible, and flexed, is shown by comparing two Bardic chairs from 1887 and from 1902 (Figures 68 and 69). The only mention of masonic furniture-making in *The Cabinet Maker* between 1880 and 1905 was to some American examples.[237] An interest in the symbolic decoration applied to law court and municipal furniture and presentation and commemorative chairs coincided, however, with its profuse use on certain carved masonic chairs from the 1870s and 1880s.

The mid-nineteenth century revival in the carving of solid wood could find suitable expression in masonic chairs, with their long-established emblematic content. The three chairs, Catalogues 41 and 42, made by Robert Nicoll in Dundee for the Operative Lodge of Dundee between 1856 and 1888[238] bear a resemblance to hall and library chair designs in Blackie's *Assistant* of 1853.[239] The Warden's chairs are carved in flat relief but the back of the Master's chair is a deeply carved medley of symbols including sun, square and compasses, Bible and maul surrounded by scrollwork hidden within which are a level and trowel. The top rail is inscribed *OPERATIVE LODGE 47* and the Wardens' chairs are also marked *47*. Elaborately carved backs are also a feature of two possibly related Master's chairs from Arbroath, Catalogue 47, and Dalkeith, Catalogue 48. Both were made singly and the Arbroath chair is visible in a photograph of 1888. The square and compasses, Bible and mauls arranged in saltire, carved within an open-work back and surrounded by vines, would appear to derive from a common source. The form of the back, including the lower rail's floral scroll and the top rail's vines enclosing an eye, the small rectangular panels with emblems carved in low relief at the joints and the beehive at the centre of the front seat rail all point to such a relationship.[240] The formal differences seen in the Dalkeith example - the egg-turned uprights and lack of an upholstered seat - presumably arose from a wish to blend in with existing furniture (Catalogue 10). The Arbroath chair may be closer to, or indeed is, the original source. The carving of the Dalkeith chair is

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[236] The editors of *The Cabinet Maker* were also interested in the chairs of the great which survived them as relics. Several articles addressed the theme, usually blending it with an antiquarian appreciation of the virtues, and occasionally the vices, of historic furniture styles.

[237] *Cabinet Maker*, April 1895, pp.263.

[238] Nicoll took over his father's business at 14 Commercial Street in 1856, opening a retail *House and Office Furnishing Warehouse* in Constitution Road in 1865 or 1866. What was, judging by advertisements, a considerable enterprise passed into the hands of James Taylor in 1888. It is possible that Nicoll moved away from the area as no home address after 1887, obituary or tombstone are known. *Post Office Directory* for Dundee (1856 and 1866), *Mathew's Directory* (1887 and 1888) & father's tombstone, Constitution Road Burial Ground, Dundee. It has not been possible to establish whether Nicoll was a member of the Lodge.

[239] Blackie 1853, plate IV.

[240] The beehive also appears on both the Master's and Warden's chairs of the Lodge of Hawick, made in 1896.

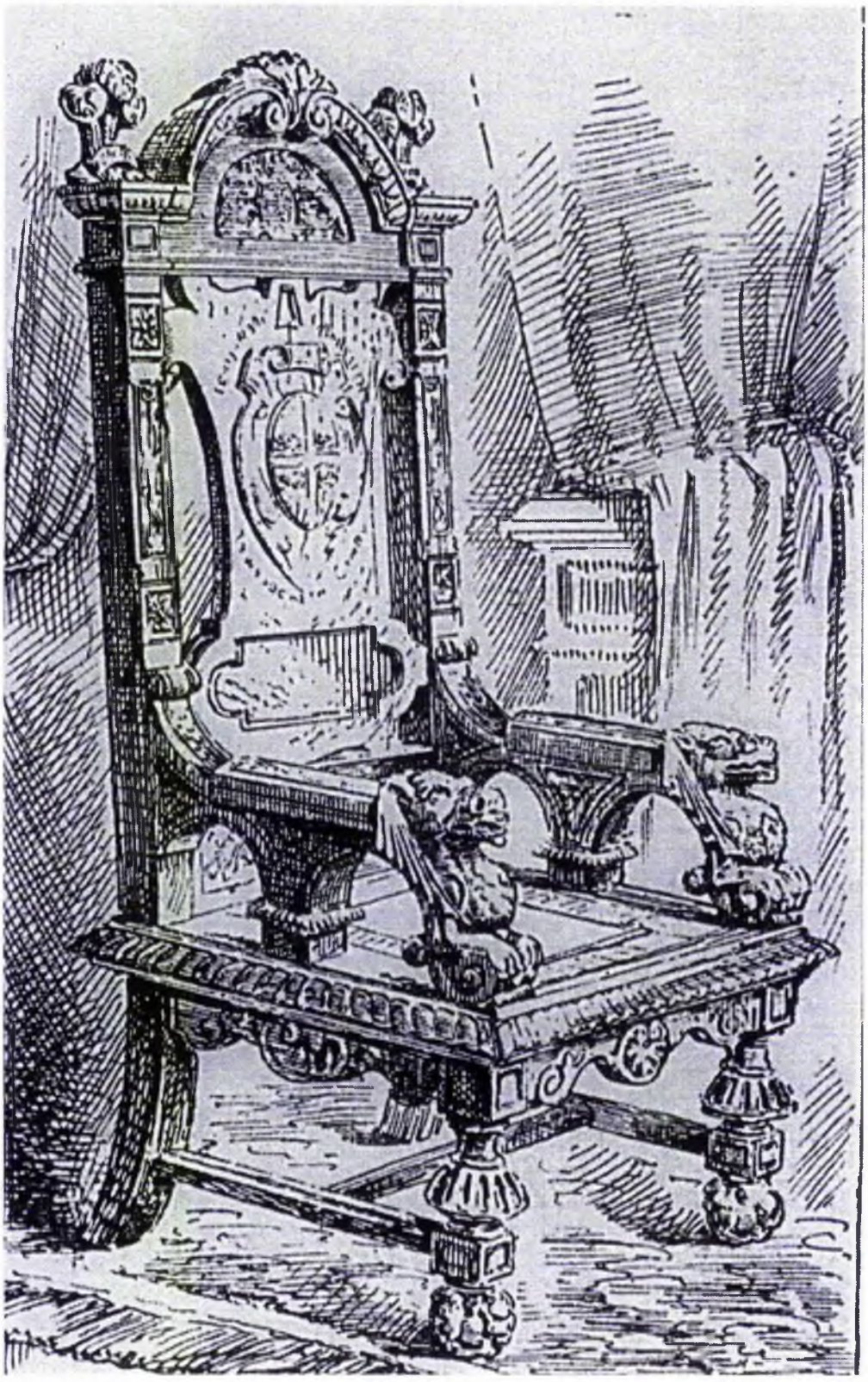

Figure 68

Morris Henry Roberts. Chair presented to the victor of the National Eisteddfod, 1887.
The Cabinet Maker, September 1887.
(Graham 1994)

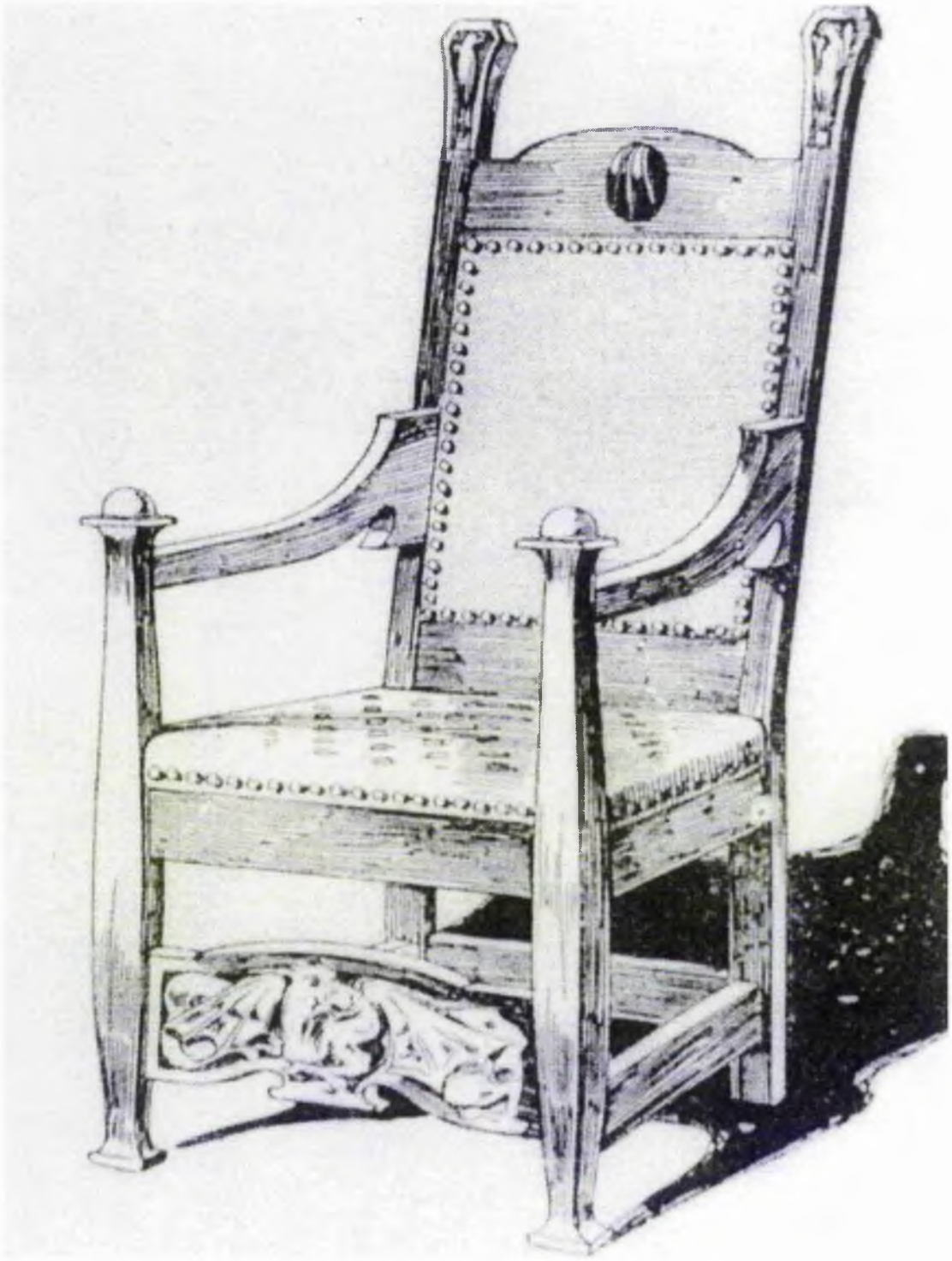

Figure 69

Chair presented to the victor of the National Eisteddfod, 1902.
(*The Cabinet Maker* September 1902)

not as accomplished and the proportions less pleasing. The choice of emblems above the front legs on the Arbroath chair are particularly apt for a fishing community: an anchor and the Ark, both traditional Christian symbols of hope. Among the more unusual emblems on the Arbroath chair are a skirret, an hour glass and a skull and cross bones, these latter symbolising mortality.

One identifiable form of the commemorative chair was that in which the raw material resonated with associations. A chair had been made out of timbers from the Golden Hind as early as 1662[241] and Sir John George Children bought up the felled trunk of the Waterloo Elm to construct a chair in 1821.[242] By the twentieth century timber considered special by virtue of its origin was being used where no directly commemorative meaning was intended. The Deacon's chair of the Glasgow Baker's Incorporation, to take one non-masonic example, was made from oak taken from the Abbey Kirk in Culross. William Beattie, the retiring Deacon who presented the chair, procured the timber from Sir Robert Rowand Anderson, the Edinburgh architect who was restoring the Kirk. The significance of the timber was simply that Culross had been the birthplace of Glasgow's patron saint, Mungo.[243] The Trades House of Glasgow Lodge, founded in 1920, appears to have specialised in utilising locally-provenanced timber. In 1927 two Warden's chairs, Catalogues 72 and 73, *of Teak from structure* [sic] *of HMS 'Glasgow'* were presented while other Lodge furnishings included items made from the roof of the Cathedral, the Old Tontine and HMS Tiger.[244] Less spurious was the local connection embodied in the three identical chairs for the Master and Wardens of St John's Lodge, Dunkeld, Catalogue 74, made in 1928 with *Wood from the Parent Larch.* The larch in question stood until 1908 in the polices close to Dunkeld Cathedral where five trees, among the first in Britain, had been planted in 1738. The timber may have been given by the eighth Duke of Atholl, a member of the Lodge, who in 1937 used planks from the same tree to panel a passageway at Blair Castle.[245] The styles in which these two sets of chairs were made differed considerably. The Dunkeld chairs are almost domestic in scale and proportion, with only the simplest of emblems, the square and compasses, and the triangular crest found elsewhere in a masonic context. The massive and imposing Glaswegian chairs appear more in keeping with the traditions of ceremonial furniture,

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[241] Graham 1994, p.92.
[242] De Bellaigue 1978.
[243] The chair was designed in 1905 by John Keppie, an ex-Deacon of Wrights and is derivative of English examples from the seventeenth century. Ness & Ness 1931, p.31.
[244] Baxter 1945, p.29.
[245] I am grateful to Jane Anderson for this information. At the time the tree was felled only two of the original five remained; the other still stands.

although the gothic form and exotic detailing presumably had little to do with the Govan-built light cruiser.

It is not easy to apply the stylistic vocabulary of classical architecture to the form of the chair. Although the back may be styled as a temple frontage, as in Catalogue 69, the incongruity with seat, arms and legs will usually discourage any such design. The designers of masonic chairs have thus tended to not to go beyond columnar stiles and triangular crests, rather metaphorical than representational of the Temple. This is not true, however, of pedestals, where the rectangular structure positively invites the use of stylobate, columns and entablature, nor of torchères which can be carved in columnar form. A set of such torchères utilising three of the classical Orders to distinguish between officers are in use at the Lodge of Falkirk, Catalogue 94. That the cut-glass lamp shades lack an aperture at the top suggests that they were designed to be fitted with electric bulbs. While, therefore, they might have been made as early as the 1880s they are more likely to date from after the First World War. The emblems of eye, sun and moon cut into the shades further distinguish each one.

The altar of the Operative Lodge of Dunkeld, Catalogue 80, is painted to appear as exactly that: a classical altar stone made from several sorts of contrasting marble. Architecture and religion are signified concurrently. It is a difficult item to date as is the altar of the Biggar Free Operative Lodge, Catalogue 81. The latter was conceived along entirely different lines, three faces of the cubical structure being painted as tracing boards. Three appropriate tool emblems are placed above an open Bible, square and compasses, the compass points placed, progressively, both under, one over and both over the square. Although both painted pine and approximately mid-nineteenth century, one prioritises tools or superficial emblems, the other the finished work of those tools or formal stylistic associations. Both approaches produced an item of furniture of which assisted in ritual, the one serving a didactic purpose, the other contributing to an atmospheric setting.

Surprisingly, the motif of the three Orders was not always employed in the case of pedestals with columns. Similar sets at Blairgowrie and Dundee Operative Lodges use the Corinthian Order in every case. (Catalogues 82 and 83.) Sets with all three were available, however, as the catalogues of masonic outfitters clearly indicate. The pedestals at Blairgowrie were probably part of the furniture to the value of £36 bought between April and November 1878 from the firm of Kenning.[246] A Master's chair, Catalogue 44, was also purchased which, however, shows no classical inspiration

[246] I am grateful to William Howie for this information.

aside from the inconspicuous Ionic capital motif towards the top of the styles. Similarly understated are the Doric, Ionic and Corinthian capitals on the slightly more columnar stiles of a trio of chairs, Catalogue 55, probably purchased around 1899 by the St James's Operative Lodge, Edinburgh.[247] There is less of a disjunction between chairs and pedestals at St Machar's Lodge, Woodside, Aberdeen, Catalogues 64 and 88. These date from 1904 and are distinguishable by their use of the three Orders. Here the back of each chair is clearly intended to suggest a pedimented frontage. To the right of each pedestal is a columnar candlestick. The garter device on the front of each pedestal can be seen on others from the period suggesting an origin with a masonic supplier.[248]

The adoption of an architectural theme rarely went as far as with the altar and pedestals of the Lodge of Gasgow St John, Catalogues 90-93. The proportions and entablatures of each Order are accurately reproduced while the altar is a miniature Doric structure. A set of three candlesticks, Catalogues 95-97, employ similar scaling. The entablature style top rails of the accompanying chairs, Catalogues 70 and 71, which were made for use alongside them are restrained, almost abstracted, and bear comparison with a set made for the Lodge of Linlithgow in 1907, Catalogues 65 and 66. The theme of architectural frontage is conveyed without rendering the appearance of the chair, as a chair, ridiculous or bizarre.

The last masonic chair to be made in Peterhead dates from the move in 1922 to its present location and was a Master's chair for both the Keith Lodge and St James Lodge (founded 1814). (Catalogue 68.) There would appear to be no record of who was responsible for its design and execution. It is nevertheless clearly influenced by the previous Master's chair (which has become the Immediate Past Master's chair) in so far as some of the emblems painted upon the back are copied from that chair.[249] The rest can only be described as classical in inspiration with the integral canopy in the form of a Doric pediment. Nothing about this chair is conventional. Canopy, classicism, emblems and height all describe a masonic chair yet the designer/maker has not copied any other single piece or based his design around an established chair form or set of historicised decorative motifs. In this it is truly modern. The canopy covers only the rear half of the seat, the columns rising from half way along the arms, while the arms and front legs extend beyond the seat itself. The serpents suggest familiarity with art deco design and are extremely unusual in masonic material culture. The serpent eating its own tail is sometimes seen in masonic prints and identified as

[247] The year in which new premises were acquired. Melville 1965, p.18.
[248] See Cryer 1989a, b & c.
[249] Seven stars have been added around the moon, however. In this and other respects, and despite its originality, the chair displays signs of having been 'designed by committee'.

symbolic of eternity. The serpents entwined about the legs of this chair, however, recall those of Asklêpius, and the caduceus, signifying wisdom. From the third century the association with wisdom and the image of the serpents entwined about a stick found a specifically Christian formulation in representations of the Serpent in the Garden of Eden entwined around the Tree of Knowledge.[250] It is unfortunate that it is not possible to know how extensive the designer's knowledge of this symbolism was yet it would seem likely that the familiar association of the Master with wisdom is intended. It is curious, therefore, that the chair uses the Doric Order, firmly associated by this date with strength. Records show that the lodge building was refitted for masonic use in 1922 under the direction of the freemason architect Harbourne MacLennan.[251] and that the joiner was John May of Peterhead. The present Secretary of the Lodge, however, favours an attribution to W. Gordon, Peterhead's leading cabinet-maker between the wars and a prominent member of Keith Lodge.

The dedicatory plaques affixed to the crest rail of each chair in the set from St Machar's, Woodside, Aberdeen, make it clear that although together a set each one was 'presented' by a different individual (or in the case of the Junior Warden's chair two individuals). Something similar took place in Alness in 1903-4 after the Averon Lodge, founded in 1897, moved to a purpose-built hall.[252] The chairs used by the Master and Wardens lack masonic ornament entirely and are in all respects identical except for the height of the Master's chair. (Catalogue 63.) In an undated *Note of Articles Averon Lodge No866 of Freemasons is desirous of taking over from Bro.J.W.Cuthbert I.P.M. with price of same attached thereto* the Master's chair is valued at £4. 7s. 6d., the Wardens' chairs at £4 each.[253] The Junior Warden's chair, however, is listed separately from those of the Master and Senior Warden which appear at the foot of the document, *the following articles... presented to Lodge*, with the names of the donors. Thus it would appear that the set was purchased to coincide with the removal to new premises but that only two members, including the Master, were willing and able to refund part of the cost as a gift. Consequently it is not safe to presume that every chair in a given set was paid for by the man whose name appears

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[250] The evolution of these symbols, including the subsequent confusion of the Caduceus with the Wand of Mercury, is outlined in Whittick 1971 under serpent.

[251] Very little is known of MacLennan, who's buildings include the Masonic Temple, Crown Street, Aberdeen.

[252] The architect and Master of St John's Lodge, Inverness, Alexander Ross, built the hall in 1902-3 using the stones of the United Presbyterian Church which he had built on the corner of Union street and Drummond Street, Inverness, in 1863-4 and demolished in 1901. The two buildings were far from dissimilar.

[253] This document probably dates from between 1904 and 1914. In addition to the three chairs there was a Secretary's chair and table (£1/12/6, £5/15/-), *candle pedestals* (£8/15/6), *1 Carpet Masonic* (£4/10/-), a harmonium with stool (£9/-/7, £1/1/-), an altar surrounded by cushions (£1/-/-, £2/5/-) and two *Oak Hall Settees* (£21/-/-).

on just one of them. Chairs like those at Alness which are 'masonic' only by dint of use are more common than the catalogue might suggest. Some lodges, including Lodge Averon, never acquired properly masonic furniture. Others, as in the eighteenth century, used a mixture of items with and without special identification or meaning. Among them, to cite just one example, was St John's Lodge, Blairgowrie, where the three pedestals and single Master's chair discussed above were used alongside domestic splat back and brander back chairs for the two Wardens.

At the opposite extreme to these homely chairs at Blairgowrie were the forays made by certain freemasons into the realms of the exotic and mysterious. French freemasonry had succumbed to Egyptionism during the 1790s: temples were built in the Egyptian style and Egyptian themes occur in the works of masonic artists such as Jean Michel Moreau Le Jeune. Britain, however, was largely unaffected until the closing years of the nineteenth century even though the 'Old Charges' gave prominence to the Egyptian origins of geometry and masonic wisdom. 'Higher degrees' had existed to satisfy the curiosity and imagination of Scottish freemasons since the 1740s but it was not until the 1860s that experiments in exotic styles can be found in Scottish masonic material culture. In this Scotland now followed the same path as other parts of Britain and America. The pages of the *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* from the period abound with accounts of 'primitive' initiation rituals, expositions on the kabala and ever more fanciful symbolic readings of the basic Hiramaic lore. Furniture illustrated in the journal included the chair in Figure 70, one of three made from walnut with copper panels in 1906 by Newlyn Art Industries, Cornwall, for presentation to the Lodge Corinth, Nagpur, India. (The cobra carved into the legs is explained as emblematic of the City of Nagpur.)[254]

The trio of chairs at St Mary's Caledonian Operative Lodge of Inverness, Catalogues 38-40, are an early combination of standard emblematic motifs with Egyptianising forms. The bulky lower frame of the Master's chair pretends to primitive construction methods: the four chamfered stretchers appear to protrude through the legs although the protrusions are, in fact, glued in place. An Ionic column is paired with an example with a palm leaf capital while the Senior and Junior Wardens' chairs have lotus bud and papyrus capitals respectively.[255] The tapering backs of the Wardens' chairs, with cavetto entablature, are modelled upon the Egyptian pylon form. A photograph of 1891 at the Lodge shows that the right-hand sphere of the Master's chair was once painted with lines of latitude and longitude with stars in some quadrants. The Lodge also uses three torchères, roughly two metres tall, shaped as Egyptian columns and

[254] Hills 1909.
[255] These classificatory terms are taken from Curl 1982.

Figure 70

Dick, Fabian & MacKenzie. Master's chair,
Lodge Corinth, Nagpur, 1906.
(Hills 1909)

three pylon-form pedestals similar to a set at St Gilbert's Lodge, Dornoch, Catalogue 89. The close similarity suggests that they were obtained from a masonic outfitter. The chairs and torchères at Inverness may have been inspired in part by representations of, or a visit to, Owen Jones' and Joseph Bonomi's Egyptian Court at the Great Exhibition of 1851 or by illustrations to Exodus, including Edward John Poynter's successful painting of 1867, *Israel in Egypt*. The form of the chairs is, above all, architectural and, indeed, places classical and Egyptian styles alongside one another. The tapering pedestal form was not exclusively Egyptian, however, and Egyptian examples may have been informed in part by pedestals similar to the altar of St John's Lodge, Maybole, Catalogue 86.

A set of chairs, Catalogues 56-58, belonging to the Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter introduce non-architectural Egyptian motifs and clearly demonstrate the non-masonic origins of a style which was, nevertheless, felt to be highly appropriate to freemasonry. The most popular of the 'higher degrees' invented throughout Europe from the 1740s onwards was the Royal Arch, the ritual narrative of which concerns the rediscovery of the name of God in the ruins of the first, Solomaic, Temple during the building of the second, under the direction of Zerubbabel, Haggai and Joshua.[256] The first known 'chapter' was established in Stirling in 1743 but there was a pronounced take-off in foundations after 1860. There is nothing Egyptian about the Royal Arch which under the aegis of a Supreme Grand Chapter, was always perceived to be the respectable higher degree. A pair of chairs made in 1913 for the Chapter at Dornoch, Catalogue 67, are perhaps more appropriate to it. Nevertheless, the Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter Room built at 78 Queen Street, Edinburgh in 1901 placed pseudo-Hebraic rituals within a thoroughly Egyptianising interior.

The architect, Peter Henderson, may also have designed the chairs.[257] An exhibition drawing, Figure 71, which was reproduced in *The Building News* shows three very different pieces at the east end of the hall. The fitted settle-style benches around the walls, however, incorporate detailing not unlike that of the six chairs under discussion. In common with many non-masonic examples they derive from a genuine ancient stool in the collection of the British Museum and closely resemble the 'Thebes Stool,' Figure 72, made by Liberty and Company from 1884 until around 1900.[258] To a basic Thebes Stool frame with its protruding legs, mushroom feet and distinctive

[256] The story has little connection with any Biblical passage but see Ezra 3.8 & 6.14 and Haggai.
[257] The Halls at Queen Street were demolished in around 1980 and the present chairs are now kept at Freemasons' Hall, George Street. Henderson was a distinguished member of Edinburgh's Lodge of Mary's Chapel. Pike 1904, p.270.
[258] On the British Museum stool and the furniture inspired by it see Humbert, Pantozzi & Ziegler 1994, p.340, and Conner 1983, catalogues 220-227.

Figure 71

Robert Sherar. *The Chapter Room at 78 Queen Street, Edinburgh*, pencil & watercolour, 1901. (Curl 1991)

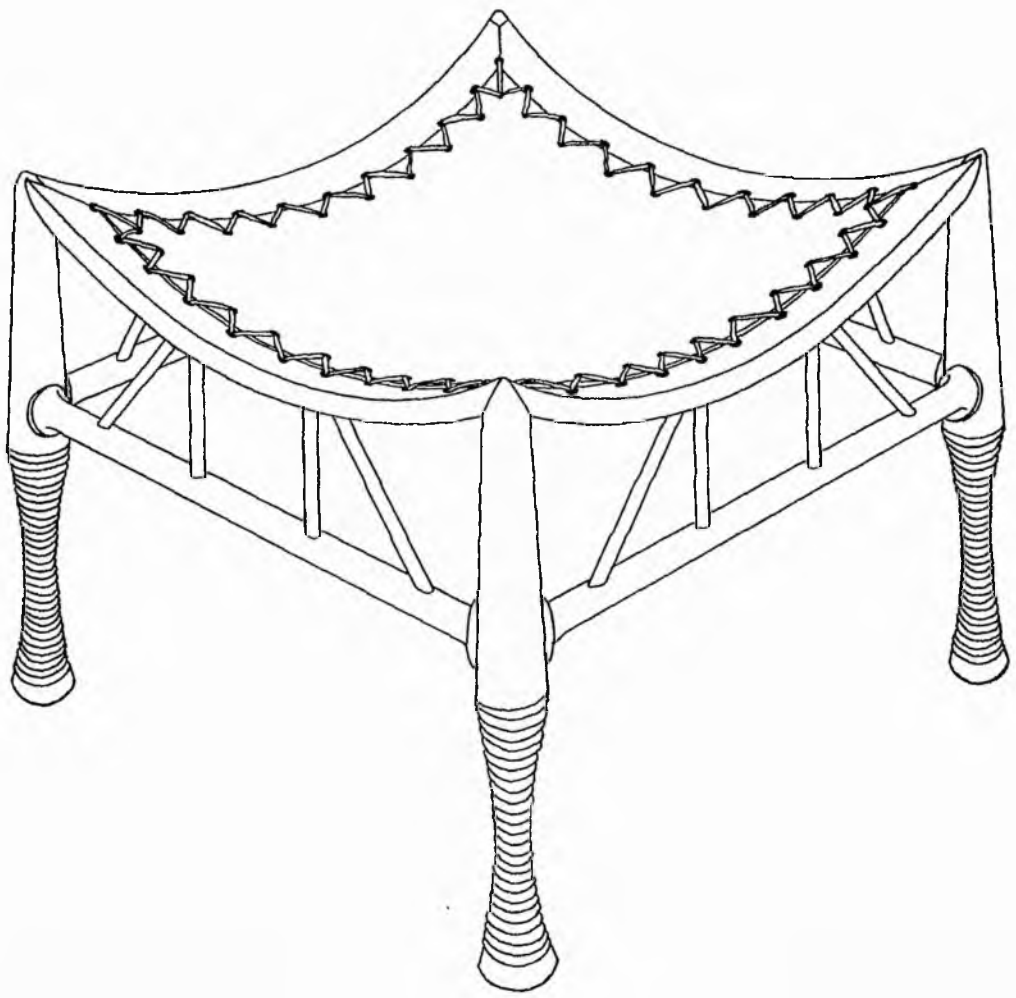

Figure 72

Liberty & Co. Thebes Stool.
(Russell, Garner & Read 1980)

turned apron piece, have been added pylon backs. The stiles of the largest chair, pertaining to the First Principal, are in the form of columns with lotus-bud capitals, its crest is embellished with a carving of the winged solar disc and the bow-shaped front legs, reminiscent of furniture by Christopher Dresser, terminate in human heads wearing the Egyptian *nemes* head-dress. Thus the chair combines elements from genuine ancient furniture with motifs, inspired by architectural forms and ornamental stone carving, traditional within western European art since the Renaissance.

Exoticism did not always take Egyptian form. The Master's chair, Catalogue 53, presented to St Gilbert's Lodge, Dornoch, in 1893 combines Hebrew and Latin inscriptions with celtic interlace motifs, the Latin being in a celtic cursive script. The Lodge Leven St John, Renton, moved to a purpose-built hall in December 1893 and its lodge room combines several 'eastern' elements to arrive at an appropriate atmosphere. The driving spirit behind its form and decorations was the widely read masonic author and Master of the Lodge for most of the period 1867-1896, Andrew MacBride. The hall interior (Figures 73 and 74) was the work of MacBride's brethren, many working in what spare time was available to them.[259] The identity of the joiner who made the Master's bench, Catalogue 54, shared with Substitute and Depute Masters, is unknown but the designer might well have been MacBride. Without quoting any established style, it has an exotic flavour. Painted black and gold, none of the conventional symbols appear although the pentagram has a history of masonic use and the finials might be construed as mauls. The pylon-shaped canvas mural of the rising sun below a winged solar disc was added in 1914, under the direction of MacBride. At the west end of the hall are two pillars in imitation of those before the Temple. Before 1914 wooden pillars flanked the Master's bench but the present examples are made from 3/16 inch sheet steel, the better to correspond with the Biblical descriptions. The lotus capitals are similarly inspired by a desire to reproduce Jachin and Boaz faithfully and each pillar is what the brethren took to be eighteen cubits in height.[260] MacBride criticised severely lodges such as the Operative Lodge of Dundee which displayed pillars with globes above them. (Catalogues 98 and 99.)

A distinguishing feature of the ritual which MacBride wrote for his Lodge was that no tracing boards were used, the Hiramiac legends being given physical from.[261] At the west end of the hall, between painted palm trees and behind a curtain bearing (Indian) swastika and (Egyptian) ankh symbols, a winding stair leads to a mezzanine Inner

[259] The following account is based upon MacNab n.d.
[260] McNab n.d., p.13. The cubit was based upon the distance between the elbow and the tip of the middle finger. Eighteen such measures are, very approximately, nine metres, about twice the height of the Renton pillars.
[261] MacBride was in fact no friend of the 'higher degrees'.

Figure 73

Lodge room, Lodge Leven St John, Renton, East end, 1995.

Figure 74

Lodge room, Lodge Leven St John, Renton, West end, 1995.

Chamber. This arrangement, dating from 1914, may be compared with the chamber and stair at Lodge Loyal, Barnstaple, made a century earlier. The function is identical and yet the seven liberal arts of the western classical tradition have been replaced by a dizzy mixture of eastern mysticisms, the delicate regency cupola by a veil of brass chains. MacBride believed that *the true mason lodge provides an environment for the development of the nobler nature of man* and that *to provide an suitable environment wherein this work may be carried on, the Lodge is isolated from all the ordinary conditions of life.*[262] How better to achieve this isolation than with exotic decor.

Masonic furniture in an Egyptian or other exotic style was not simply a product of Egyptomania and similar outbreaks which have periodically seized European decorative art.[263] It was neither frivolous nor meaningless and should be read as an expression of a wider, perhaps perennial, social phenomenon. There has been an increasing tendency in western thought over the past three hundred years or more towards the sympathetic comprehension of the 'other', the attempt to understand cultures other than our own in their own terms, often as a necessary prerequisite to understanding all culture as a unity. Paradoxically, this intellectual, and, latterly, public, academic viewpoint, for some legitimated, and gave credence to, attempts to acquire esoteric wisdom from the same exotic subjects, subjects which included, for example, ancient Egypt. Those in the west who were excluded culturally from the academy and its backers could nevertheless feel that developments in mythology, anthropology and Egyptology pointed to the truth and value of their beliefs. MacBride, attempting not to make men better citizens or even better Christians, welded together several 'styles' to bring himself and his brethren closer to the attainment of a higher condition of being.

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[262] MacNab n.d., p.11.

[263] Egyptian motifs have been applied to every form of object from blancmange moulds (Wedgwood and Bently) to the radiator cap of the 1933 Invicta S100 Torpedo sports car, but in all such cases fashion has merely alighted upon a new turn of phrase. The best survey of the phenomenon is probably Humbert, Pantazzi & Ziegler 1994.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The observations of furniture historians on masonic material have largely taken the form of isolated comments. In the past this was due to an approach which prioritised aesthetic evaluation and treated the material as ersatz domestic furniture. Edward Joy, in discussing the collection of chairs at Freemason's Hall in London, dwells upon craftsmanship and aesthetic values (delicacy, grace, control). *Skilfully incorporating the traditional masonic emblems in their decoration*, these chairs are described as *excellent examples* of *prevailing contemporary styles*.[264] Clare Graham, by contrast, considers masonic chairs as ceremonial chairs, a object type sub-group which includes material drawn from several social contexts and yet sharing a similar ceremonial function. She examines the ceremonial origins of the chair *per se* and describes how a distinct category of the ceremonial chair came to inform the work of designers and makers. This framework does not, however, preclude the conclusion that

> the majority of examples are enlarged versions of domestic armchairs, incorporating appropriate symbolic decoration. This is usually concentrated on the back of the chair, which will often be exceptionally high.[265]

The reason for this, as Joy suggested, was that *there was no need to disregard fashion* when designing a ceremonial chair.[266] This is an important point since it is too often thought that ceremonial chairs will inevitably show signs of stylistic conservatism. Yet, even so, fashion is by its very nature expensive and exclusive. Any survey of documented domestic furniture will reveal a variety of styles in production at any one time and in the market for ceremonial chairs *most clients and makers seem to have been unaware of, or at least untroubled by, the situation.*[267]

Scottish masonic Master's chairs from the period before 1840 largely conform to this pattern keeping pace with fashion, but at a distance. Nevertheless, they may be distinguished from other forms of ceremonial chair. The majority differ from English masonic examples in their vernacular character, the result of Scotland's distinct social and cultural position within the United Kingdom and, in particular, of distinctions

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[264] Joy 1965, p.160.
[265] Graham 1994, p.13.
[266] Graham 1994, p.68.
[267] Graham 1994, p.69.

between English and Scottish freemasonry. Vernacular forms imply a degree of conservatism, as in the chairs made between 1867 and 1898 for the Keith Lodge of Peterhead, yet this is not usually a conscious statement of conservatism in opposition to something else. Vernacular form is a characteristic shared with many Scottish trade incorporation chairs. Scottish Master's chairs differ from Scottish Deacon's chairs, however, in several respects. For the period 1795-1825, not only are the backs of such chairs exceptionally high but the seat is elevated well above the normal height. The symbolic decoration of masonic chairs has the distinction of being, nominally, esoteric and while, as on other ceremonial chairs, superficial emblems were used in both a quasi-heraldic and a less orderly, decorative manner, the masonic chair could be distinguished from other types by formal elements such as Solomaic pillars or the classical Orders of Architecture. Development of the symbolic repertoire, moreover, took place to a limited extent as part of the history of the furniture to which it was applied.

Masonic furniture was less public than that used in some other ceremonial contexts and yet it might be on view, at certain times, to those who would never have seen it in use. The furniture belonging to organisations which did not practise secret rituals was not necessarily regularly on view to the public in a pre-democratic age. Not all trade incorporation meetings were open to the trade's own journeymen, for example. Nor was masonic furniture as ceremonious in itself as some other kinds. It formed a backdrop to an elaborate ritual but rarely played any extensive part in that ritual. Glasgow University's Blackstone chair was in this respect considerably more ceremonious.[268] This is not to deny the imposing effect of chairs such as those from Dunfermline but to suggest that lodge furniture was an important investment for its users because it provided evidence of gentility, respectability and permanency. Tradition was less significant and inferior furniture would usually be scrapped when the opportunity arose to replace it. Furniture which was unfashionable, unelevatingly vernacular or simply worn out was of no value to a lodge which sought to continue to attract members and keep up appearances. Only from the late nineteenth century, once historicised styles were to be found in all areas of furniture production, did genuinely old furniture come to be valued. At roughly the same time that William Wheeler was fabricating a seventeenth century Master' chair for a lodge founded in 1764, the Earl of Elgin was rescuing a set of late eighteenth century chairs to be placed in the lodge he had recently (1910) established on his Broomhall estate.

[268] Jackson 1995.

The earliest masonic furniture, boxes for the storage of funds, was essentially 'un-incorporated' trades furniture. It was inevitable, however, that masonic furniture would develop along different lines from that of the trade incorporations given the growing dissimilarity between the two types of institution. One early distinction arose during the late seventeenth century, before lodges acquired much in the way of furniture: the institution of a second, junior, Warden.[269] Both institutions tended to have a Deacon and Warden and although the names might alter the trades continued with two principal officers. Thus at Edinburgh's Incorporation of Wrights and Masons there were two chairs for the Deacons of each craft while at Perth the Wrights' Incorporation, with only one Deacon, still had two, unequal, chairs. Pairs of chairs were in use for the Deacon and Clerk of Edinburgh's Goldsmiths' Incorporation and among the trades of Old Aberdeen, perhaps for a Deacon and Warden. Lodges, however, naturally had one or three chairs.[270] Similarities between masonic and trades chairs include the fact that each category is marked by diversity. Each contains its share of genteel and vernacular material and regional forms can be found in each case: the trades chairs of Aberdeen, for example, or the Master's chair of Loudoun Kilwinning Lodge. Unlike the trades, however, freemasonry penetrated small non-urban settlements and its adherents were drawn from a wider social spectrum, both above and below the level of the masters who ran the trade incorporations. The exact social composition of lodges varied as did the furnishings.

While no regional forms as clear cut as the Cheshire group described by Christopher Gilbert have come to light in Scotland, it is possible that the Kirkcaldy chairs were loosely modelled upon those at Dunfermline. Patterns of this kind must depend upon a local masonic culture fostered by regular contact. Minute books record the reception at a single meeting of individual strangers who could prove themselves masons but it is unlikely that there was much regular commingling. At the extremes, the freemasons of Edinburgh regularly met together to process and sent small deputations to the others' meetings while at Perth, the very existence of two lodges spoke of social segregation. There is clear evidence of cross-institutional borrowing at Perth, however, within the Incorporation/Lodge framework, and at Cromarty, among the *friendly societies of the place*.[271]

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[269] Stevenson 1988a, p.150.

[270] The arrangement found today at Universities and at some learned societies, including for example the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons in Edinburgh, of a President's or Principal's chair flanked by two smaller chairs is, of course, in no sense analogous to the arrangement of the masonic lodge room interior.

[271] Miller quoted above, p.11.

In every case from the period before 1840 where documentary evidence has been examined or cited the making of masonic furniture in Scotland was entrusted to a member of the lodge concerned even where it was actually manufactured by employees who were not freemasons. Moreover, the maker was in every such case paid. Items for which there would appear to be no written record, for example the chair made for Peterhead's Keith Lodge in 1808, may have been freely given to the lodge by the now anonymous maker and yet it is clear that gifts were usually recorded while not every financial transaction found its way into the minute books. Regrettably, no furniture by any of these makers other than that recorded here is yet known and it is consequently not possible to assess that work in the light of other pieces. For some, for example Sinclair, their masonic furniture may have been an exceptional task, for others, for example Cunningham, it was well within their capabilities and similar to their standard work. Indeed the least conventional pieces are those made by wrights, not cabinet-makers or chair-makers.

Another gap in our knowledge which it has not been possible to fill concerns the nature of the furniture at several important urban lodges, including those of Glasgow and Edinburgh Mary's Chapel.[272] Sebastian Pryke rightly rejects any association between the eagle-crested ceremonial chair in the Temple Newsam collection and Edinburgh's Lodge Roman Eagle. He nevertheless conjectures that the chair had a masonic origin as well as a Scottish provenance. This seems unlikely. Although eagles held a masonic significance for some English lodges, the chair displays no other masonic characteristics and would be by far the highest quality masonic product so far known. It would have to have been exceptional since it is unlikely that such high quality pieces would generally not survive when so much less attractive, monetarily less valuable material has.

The architectural historian James Stevens Curl argues that there exists a coherent masonic style which comprehends the purest neo-classical architecture, the late works of Mozart and the constitution of the United States of America. It is certainly *an amalgam of many things* yet, he asserts, it has *a distinctive flavour that is instantly recognisable...that pervades the second half of the eighteenth century and the first two decades of the nineteenth.*[273] One does not have to examine the examples he cites too closely to see this is somewhat over-optimistic. The occasional (semi-)covert appearance of masonic content in art and architecture is undeniable but arose because the artist or architect regarded his work in a masonic light. Elements such as Egyptianising which were perceived by freemasons as masonic can usually be found

[272] Always supposing that distinct furniture was used at Mary's Chapel.
[273] Curl 1991, p.229.

to have cultural roots elsewhere. This is not to deny the inspirational power that freemasonry could exert but rather to ask what was peculiar to freemasonry that could not be found elsewhere. The answer, not surprisingly, is very little. It is only too easy, following Curl, to see freemasonry in everything whereas the broad-minded observer sees everything in freemasonry. For Curl freemasonry is, *in fact, the essence of Neoclassicism, the kernel of a movement that changed the world.*[274] It is, in fact, nothing of the kind: most of the originators of neo-classicism were non-freemasons whose non-masonic motivations and influences are well known.

What applies to neo-classicism applies, in a different way, to the artistic productions of freemasons *qua* freemasons in Scotland throughout the period 1680-1920. These men borrowed extensively to give substance to their masonic ideals and did so in widely differing ways. The concept of a masonic style will not accommodate such diversity. The influences upon them included English print, trade incorporation chests and chairs, the furnishings of the kirk and, in the later nineteenth century, gothic and Egyptian architecture and a new interest in the ceremonial chair as a category. Very broadly these influences progress from the material culture of parallel or rival organisations to general trends in the decorative arts and embrace both actual furniture and less immediate sources of inspiration.

While masonic furniture can usefully be distinguished from other forms of ceremonial furniture the lasting impression is one of diversity, the result during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries of social and geographical diversity and from the mid-nineteenth century of diversity within freemasonry. No uniform style was ever imposed or adopted. After around 1860 masonic furniture came either to resemble ordinary domestic furniture more closely or to depart from it more obviously. The styles used continued to range widely and unpredictably, however, from pseudo-celtic to gothic. Some of these styles were given masonic connotations but were rarely developed further by freemasons. Freemasonry gave nothing to the late nineteenth century ceremonial chair: the Victorian love of allegory and symbolism may have contributed to the revival of freemasonry but not vice versa. The Egyptian interior of the Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter room in Edinburgh is a striking example of a non-masonic design adapted to masonic ends. In adding columnar stiles to the chair the designer added masonic content yet this was just a new variation upon the Jachin and Boaz theme and it is the borrowing and permutation which leaves the strongest impression.

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[274] Curl 1991, p.229.

In rejecting the concept of a masonic style, even applied to so narrow a field as furniture in a single country, I do not wish to belittle the achievements of Scotland's freemason wrights. Many variations upon standard themes were produced to the credit of individuals and communities. The design of a trio of masonic chairs or of an integrated interior provided challenges and opportunities for both gifted professionals and enthusiastic amateurs. I hope to have shown in this work that masonic furniture was as much a form of 'folk art', or people's art, as a luxury product consumed by metropolitan gentlemen.

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CATALOGUE

EXPLANATIONS

The furniture is arranged under four main headings: boxes and kists, seat furniture, pedestal furniture and torchères, candlesticks and pillars. Within these sections the order is chronological.

FORM OF ENTRIES:

Location
Original owner
Present location (Where items are not located at premises owned by the lodge concerned this is indicated in brackets. For exact locations readers are referred to the Grand Lodge of Scotland Yearbook.)

Catalogue Number

Maker (where known)
Nature of item
Wood used
Date
Insc (= Inscriptions. These are transcribed in full and either carved, inlaid or painted unless otherwise stated.)
Lit (= Literature. References are only given to works which are broadly art historical rather than masonic.)
Exh (= Exhibition. Reference is made to exhibition catalogues.)
Measurements. (All measurements are in centimetres. H indicates height, W width, D depth. The width and depth of chairs are measured at the seat rail. Where two width measurements are given the first is that at the front, the second that at the rear.

Where appropriate, short notes on the maker are given with references to the sources of information.

All photographs are by the author except where otherwise acknowledged.


LOCATION MAP
LODGES REPRESENTED IN THE CATALOGUE
Lodges mentioned in the text
Kirkwall
Thurso
Stornoway
DORNOCH
ALNESS
CROMARTY
Elgin
PETERHEAD
INVERNESS
ABERDEEN
Stonehaven
FORFAR
DUNKELD
BLAIRGOWRIE
COUPAR ANGUS
ARBROATH
DUNDEE
PERTH
St Andrews
CRIEFF
Anstruther
INVERARAY
DUNBLANE
Stirling
KIRKCALDY
DUNFERMLINE
Limekilns
RENTON
FALKIRK
DUMBARTON
LINLITHGOW
EDINBURGH
DALKEITH
GLASGOW
BELLSHILL
HAUGHFOOT
KILWINNING
Peebles
Melrose
Kelso
BIGGAR
KILMARNOCK
NEWMILNS
TARBOLTON
Hawick
Campbeltown
Ayr
MAYBOLE

BOXES AND KISTS

Kilwinning
Lodge Mother Kilwinning

1 Box
oak & mahogany
*c.*1700
Probably repaired. Iron fittings.
H: 25 W: 43 D: 26

CATALOGUE 1

Haughfoot
Lodge of Haughfoot
(Freemasons' Hall, Edinburgh)

2 ?William Murray
Box
oak
1727
Iron fittings. One of the three locks and all three escutcheons are missing.
H: 24 W: 48 D: 28

William Murray, a member of the Lodge, was paid a total of £5 14s Scots for the box but it is unclear whether he made, or simply purchased, it. (Carr 1951, pp.25 &27)

CATALOGUE 2

Kilmarnock
Lodge St John Kilwinning

3 Box
oak & pine
*c.*1734
Iron fittings.
H: 21 W: 55 D: 35

CATALOGUE 3

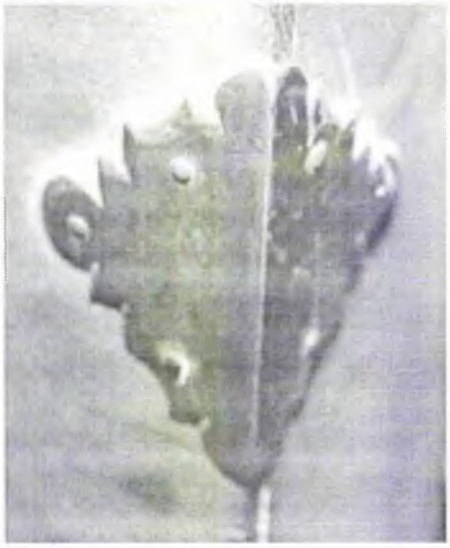
Dalkeith
Lodge Dalkeith Kilwinning
(Freemasons' Hall, Edinburgh)

4 Box
oak
1737
Iron and brass fittings with cotton lining.
Insc: (on the escutcheon) *1737.*
H: 14 W: 53.5 D: 35.5

CATALOGUE 4

Inveraray
Lodge Inveraray St John

5 Kist
oak & ?boxwood
1786
The brass fitments have been removed and reused. Considerable worm damage.
Dimensions unknown



CATALOGUE 5

Renton
Lodge Leven St John

6 Kist
oak, ?cherry, boxwood & ebony
1791
Iron fittings
Insc: *LEVEN ST JOHN'S 17 91*
One lock is missing as are the internal compartments.
H: 27 W: 72 D: 37.5

CATALOGUE 6

Forfar
The Ancient Lodge of Forfar Kilwinning

7 Kist
pine, painted decoration
early 19th century
Iron and ?tin fittings.
Insc:FORFAR. /KILWINNING., / LODGE. / of / ANCT= Free MASONS & (under the ?tin escutcheons) *3*, *2* & *1*.
Dimensions unknown

CATALOGUE 7

SEAT FURNITURE

Crieff
Lodge St Michael

8 Master's chair
oak & beech
*c.*1700
The chair has been cut down and extensively repaired. Extensive worm damage.
Insc: (brass plates) *CRIEFF ST MICHAEL'S LODGE / OF FREEMASONS NO.38 / OAK CHAIR / WHICH WAS USED BY THE / RWM HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF PERTH / AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE LODGE / 27TH DECR 1737. / ALSO USED AT THE CENTENARY OF THE LODGE / 27TH DECR 1837 / BY THE / RWM SIR WM KEITH MURRAY BART / OF OCHTERTYRE.* and *ALSO USED / AT THE BI-CENTENARY OF THE LODGE / 12TH FEBRY 1938 / BY / SIR NORMAN A. ORR EWING, BART D.S.O., A.D.C., V.L. / GRAND MASTER MASON OF SCOTLAND.*
H: 102.5 W: 63/40 D: 44

CATALOGUE 8

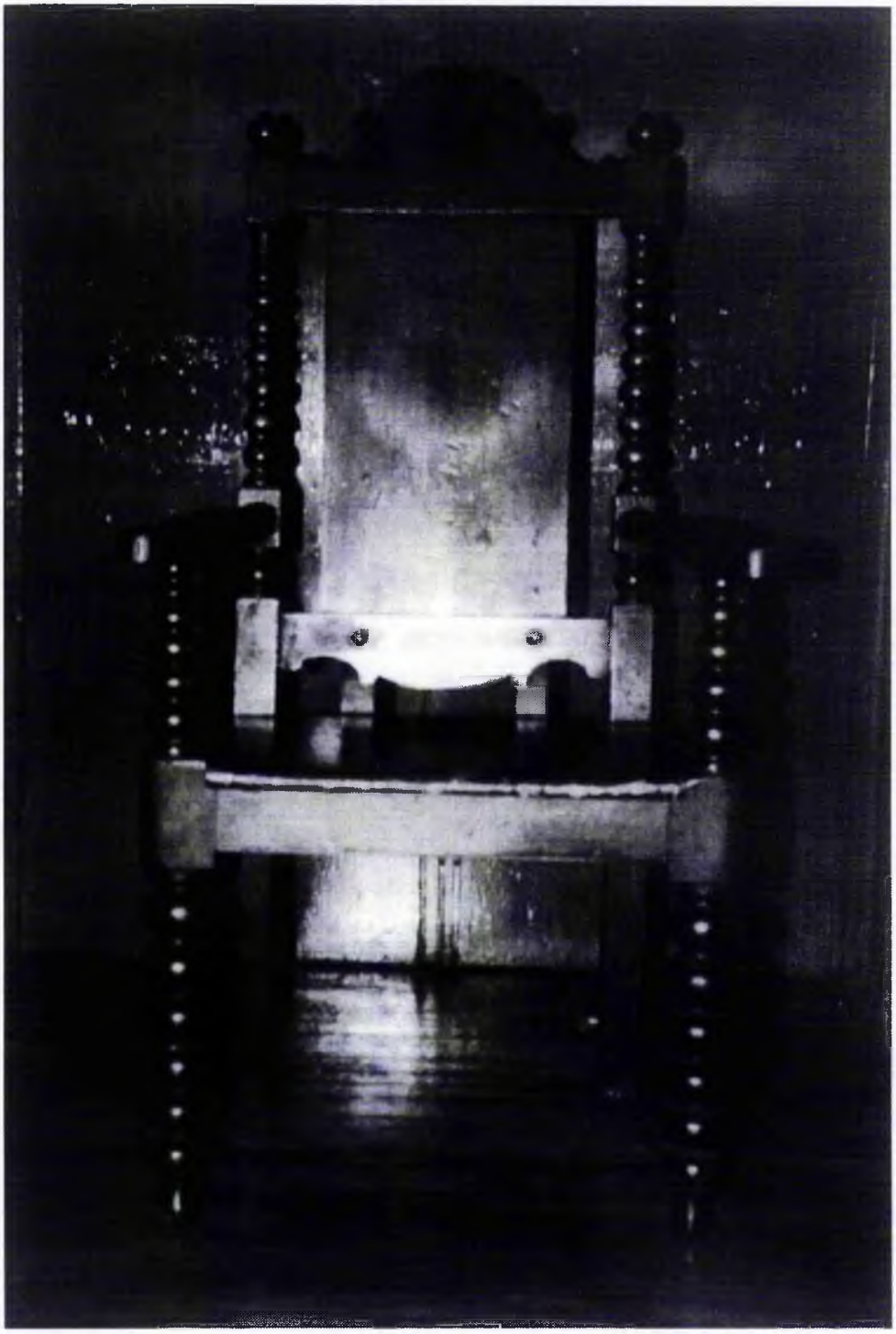
Perth
Lodge Scoon and Perth

9 Master's chair
beech & coloured woods
1739
Some worm damage. The velvet drop-in seat is modern.
Insc: (brass plate) *This chair was presented to The Wrights Incorporation / in 1739 / by Lodge Scoon & Perth / and returned to them in / 1969 just 230 years after / for safe custody.*
H: 150 W: 51/62 D: 53

CATALOGUE 9

Dalkeith
Lodge Dalkeith Kilwinning

10 Set of three chairs
oak
?1764
Two have been repaired with iron clamps.
H: 214.5 W: 60.5/49.5 D:52.5



CATALOGUE 10

Inveraray
Lodge Inveraray St John

11 John Stevenson
Master's chair
mahogany
1781
Damage to top rail. Recently re-upholstered in blue velvet.
H: 160 W: 63 D: 64

John Stevenson, a member of the Lodge, was paid £7 10s for the chair. He may have been related to the wrights Francis and Thomas Stevenson who worked in Inveraray for the second Duke of Argyll. (Johnstone 1909, p.16 and Lindsay & Cosh 1973, p.434)

(Photograph: Johnstone 1909, frontispiece)

CATALOGUE 11

Newmilns
Lodge Loudoun Kilwinning

12 Armchair
ash & elm
late 18th century
Worm damage. There is a spindle missing.
Insc: (brass plate) *This chair / was occupied by / Brother Robert Burns / Mossghel Mauchline / on the date when he was made an affiliate member of / LODGE LOUDOUN NEWMILNS KILWINNING / NO.51 / 27TH MARCH, 1786.*
H: 137 W: 71.5 D: 45

CATALOGUE 12

Tarbolton
Lodge St James (Kilwinning) Tarbolton

13 Master's chair
beech
late 18th century
H: 126 W: 57/44 D: 47.5

Master's footstool
beech
? late 18th century
H: 32 W: 64/59 D: 38

CATALOGUE 13

Biggar
Biggar Free Operative Lodge

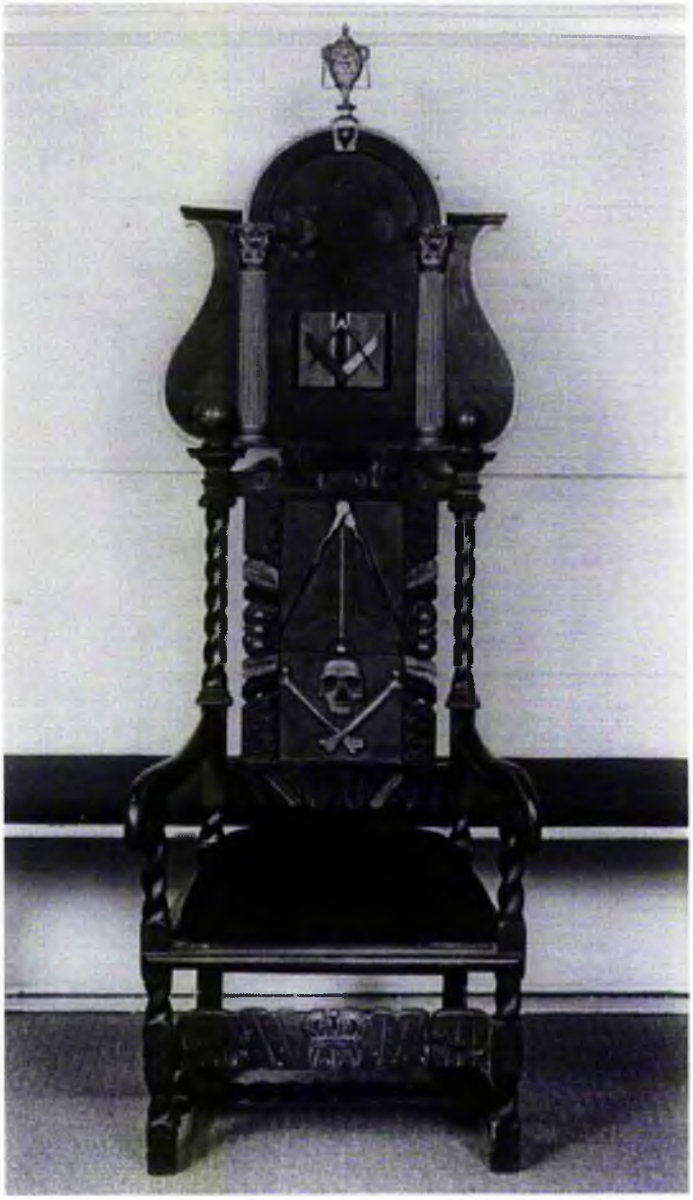
14 John Sinclair & Robert Black
Master's chair
oak & pine, painted decoration
The urn finial is cast iron.
Lit: Jones 1987, catalogue 13
Exh: Crawford Arts Centre, St Andrews & Collins Gallery, Glasgow (Jones 1987)
Dimensions unknown

Sinclair supplied the lower part of the chair on 8th January 1795 for £2 4s 10d. The cresting was supplied at a later date by Robert Black for £1 5s 4 1/2d. Both were members of the Lodge. (Jones 1987, catalogue 13)

(Photograph: Peter Adamson)

15 Two Wardens' chairs
?pine, painted
*c.*1800
Dimensions unknown

(Photograph: Peter Adamson)



CATALOGUE 14

CATALOGUE 15

Dunfermline
Lodge St John
(Lodge Elgin and Bruce, Limekilns, Fife)

16 John Williamson
Master's chair
beech & pine
1796
The chair was extensively repaired *c.*1920 by Robert Stark.
H: 154.5 W: 69 D: 60

17 John Williamson
Senior Warden's chair
beech
1796
Extensive worm damage
H: 195.5 W: 69 D: 60

18 John Williamson
Junior Warden's chair
beech
1796
Some worm damage and some repairs
H: 189.5 W: 70.5 D: 61

Williamson, a member of the Lodge, was paid £4 18s for the three chairs between 20 December 1796 and 12 June 1797. (Trotter 1984, p.99)

CATALOGUE 17

CATALOGUE 16

CATALOGUE 18

Peterhead
The Keith Lodge of Peterhead

19 Master's chair
beech & ?boxwood
1808
The brown leather drop-in seat is modern.
Insc: *KEITH - LODGE. NO 56. 1808*
H: 166 W: 71/ 59 D: 55

CATALOGUE 19

Kilwinning
Lodge Mother Kilwinning

20 Alexander Cunningham
Two officer's chairs
beech & mahogany, painted decoration
1809
The back slats of one are fluted, the other not. The latter chair is extensively damaged.
H: 102.5 W: 53/44 D: 48

Cunningham, a member of the Lodge, was paid £12 15s 2d for three chairs between March 1809 and December 1810. (Carr 1961, p.258)

CATALOGUE 20

Edinburgh
Lodge Canongate Kilwinning

21 John Burke
Two Wardens' chairs
beech, painted decoration
1814
The seat of one has been repaired in pine.
H: 109.5 W: 54/42 D: 43

Burke was approached to make these chairs in November 1814, becoming a member of the Lodge as a result. (Minutes of the Lodge Canongate Kilwinning, volume II, 8 November & 14 December 1814)

CATALOGUE 21

Kirkcaldy
The Lodge of Kirkcaldie

22 ?James Barnet
Master's chair
pine, ?papier maché, painted decoration
1815
A section of aluminium has been added to the front stretcher.
H: 198 W: 77.5/64.5 D: 57

23 ?James Barnet
Depute Master's & Immediate Past Master's chairs
pine, painted decoration
1815
A section of aluminium has been added to the front stretcher
H: 174 W: 56/49 D: 51.5

24 ?James Barnet
Two Wardens' chairs
pine, painted decoration
1815
A section of aluminium has been added to the front stretcher.
H: 179.5 W: 55.5/49 D: 51

(Not illustrated)

The five chairs were made by a member of the Barnet family, probably James, for £8 15s. (I am grateful to Andrew Haggart for examining the minute books of the Lodge to extract this information)

CATALOGUE 22

CATALOGUE 23

Edinburgh
Lodge of Journeymen Masons

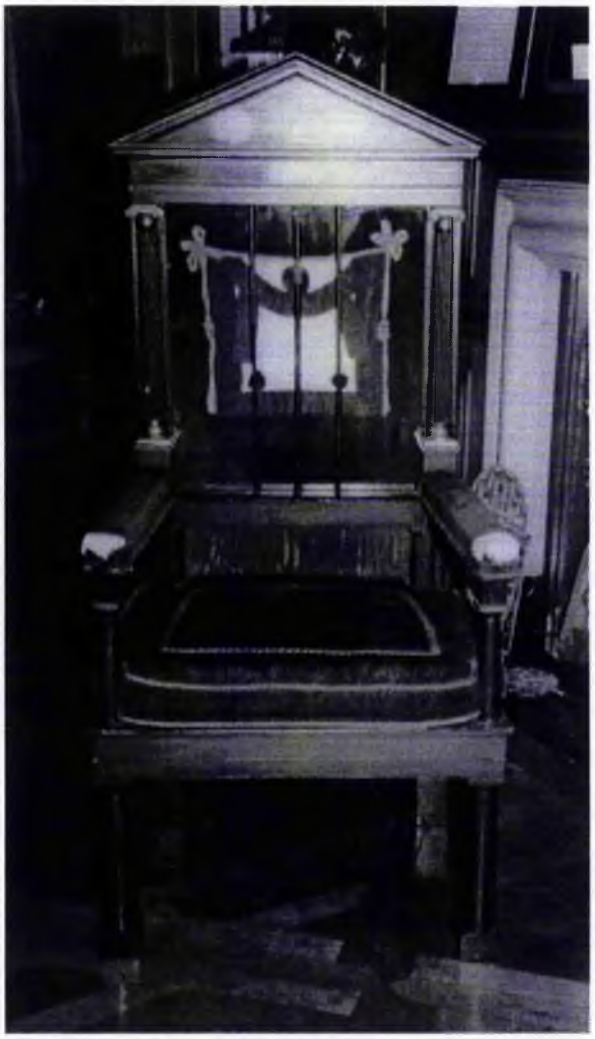
25 Master's chair
?oak, painted decoration
1816
The left hand globe is loose.
H: 202 W: 72 D: 53.5

CATALOGUE 25

Edinburgh
Lodge Edinburgh St Andrew
(Freemasons' Hall, Edinburgh)

26 George Kemp
Master's chair
oak & pine, glass & textile, painted decoration
1827
The blue velvet upholstery and blue plaited tassels appear to be original.
Insc: (silver plate) *PRESENTED BY / GEORGE M. KEMP / ARCHITECT OF SIR WALTER SCOTT'S MONUMENT / TO HIS MOTHER LODGE / ST ANDREWS (NO 48) / EDINBURGH IN THE YEAR 1827.*

Kemp gave the chair in return for being made a member of the Lodge. (Bonnar 1892, p.139)



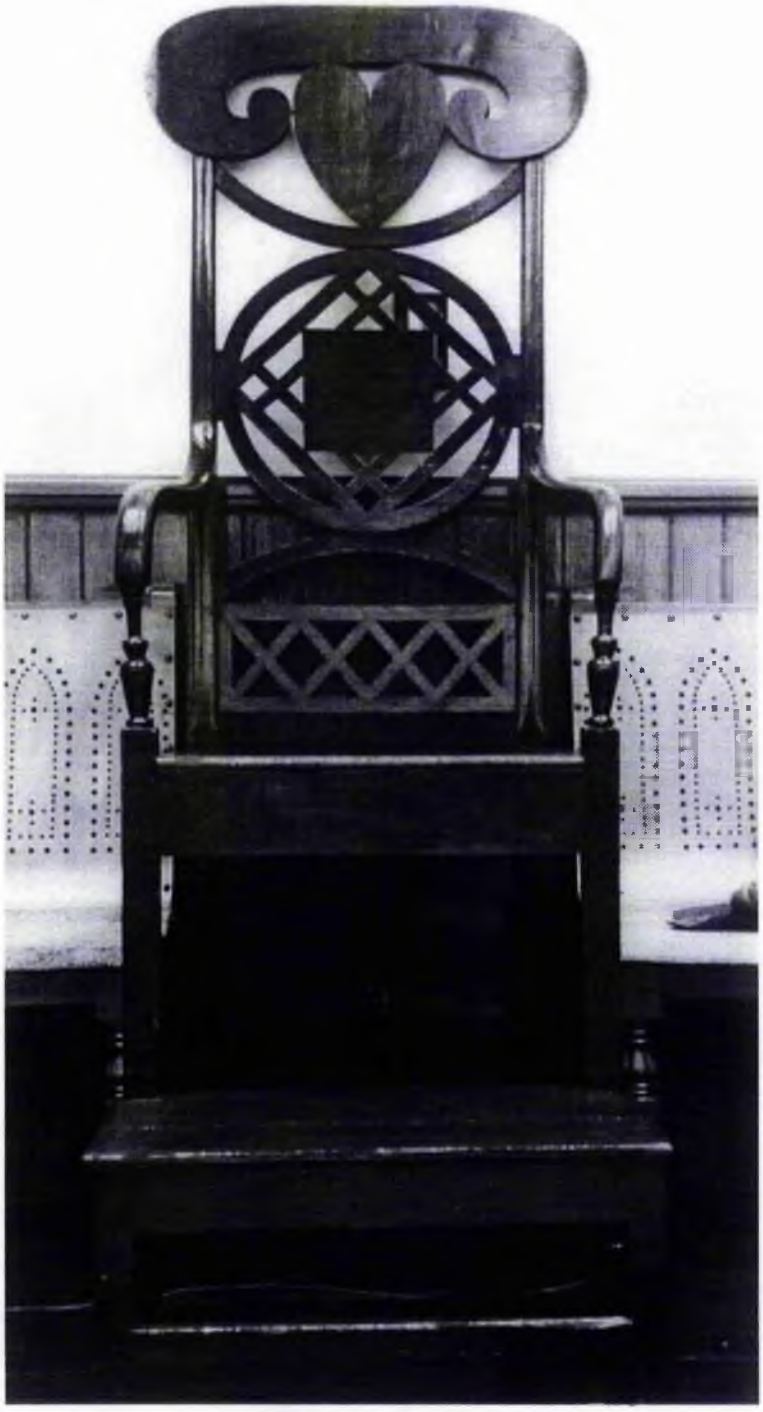
CATALOGUE 26

Cromarty
Robertson's Lodge

27 Master's chair
beech & ?ebony
*c.*1825
Used as a Senior Warden's chair since 1914. The footrest is not original. Some worm damage.
H: 177 W: 66/56 D: 50

28 Ceremonial chair
beech
*c.*1825
Used as a Junior Warden's chair since 1914. The footrest is not original. The seat has been replaced.
H: 199 W: 66/57 D: 50

CATALOGUE 27



CATALOGUE 28

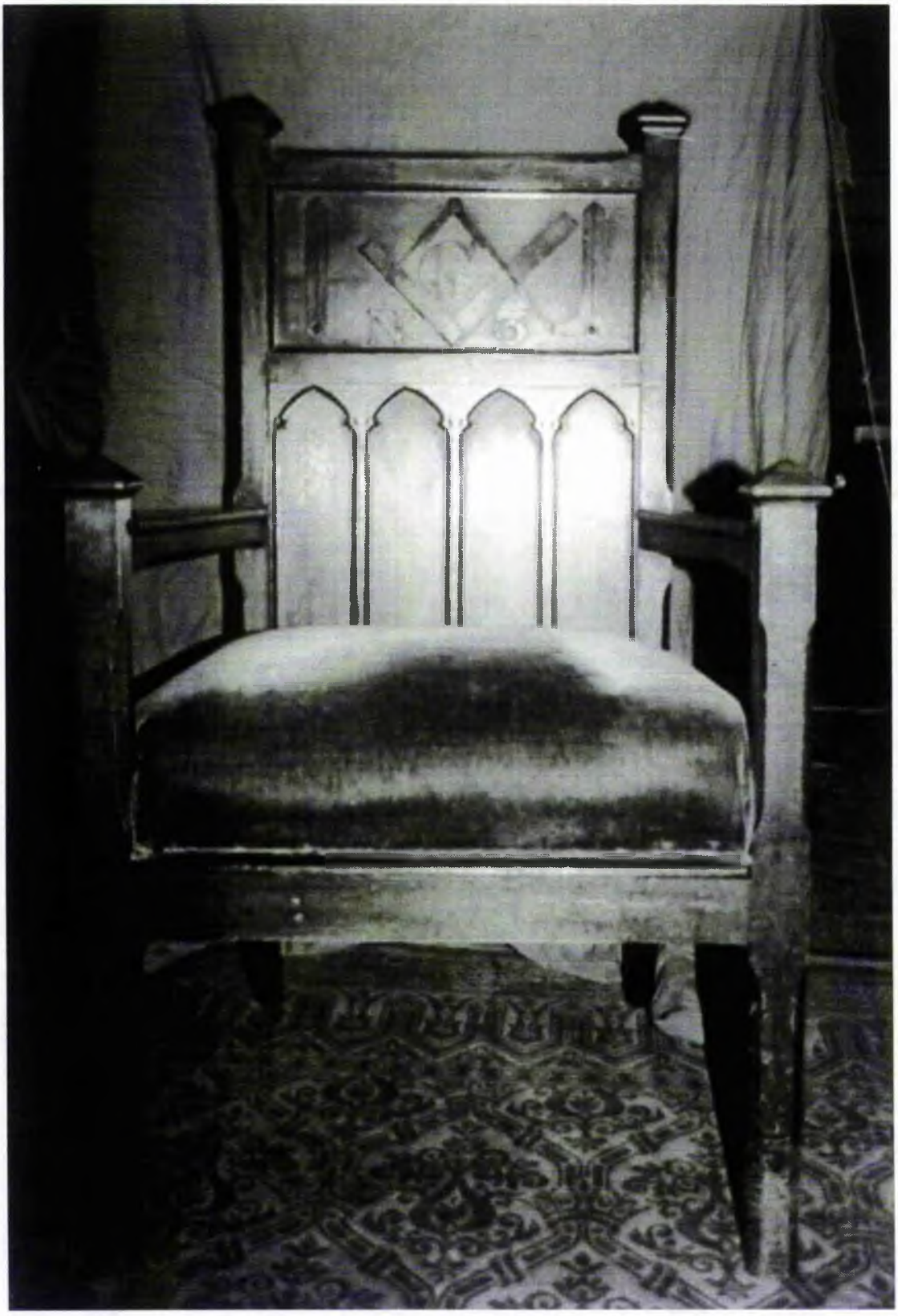
Perth
Lodge Scoon and Perth

29 Thomas Ower
Master's chair
oak
1831
The velvet cushion is an addition.
H: 136 W: 76/62 D: 61

30 Thomas Ower
Two Wardens' chairs
oak
1831
H: 110.5 W: 60/48 D: 54

31 ?Thomas Ower
Eight officer's chairs
oak
*c.*1831
H: 93.5 W: 49/39 D: 43.5

Thomas Ower, a wright by trade, presented catalogues 29 and 30 while Master of the Lodge and may have also supplied catalogue 31. (Smith 1898, p.96)



CATALOGUE 29

CATALOGUE 30

CATALOGUE 31

Newmilns
Lodge Loudoun Kilwinning

32 Senior Warden's chair
elm
1834
The seat board has possibly been replaced.
H: 117 W: 59/49 D: 56

CATALOGUE 32

Bellshill
Lodge Woodhall St John's

33 Master's chair
birch
?early 19th century
H: 110.5 W: 63 D: 42

CATALOGUE 33

Edinburgh
Lodge Canongate Kilwinning

34 Officer's chair
?elm
?*c.*1835
Dimensions unknown

CATALOGUE 34

Coupar Angus
Lodge St John Operative

35 Master's chair
beech, painted decoration
early 19th century
The stencilled decoration in gold is probably a later addition.
Insc: *St John's Lodge 105 Coupar Angus*
Dimensions unknown

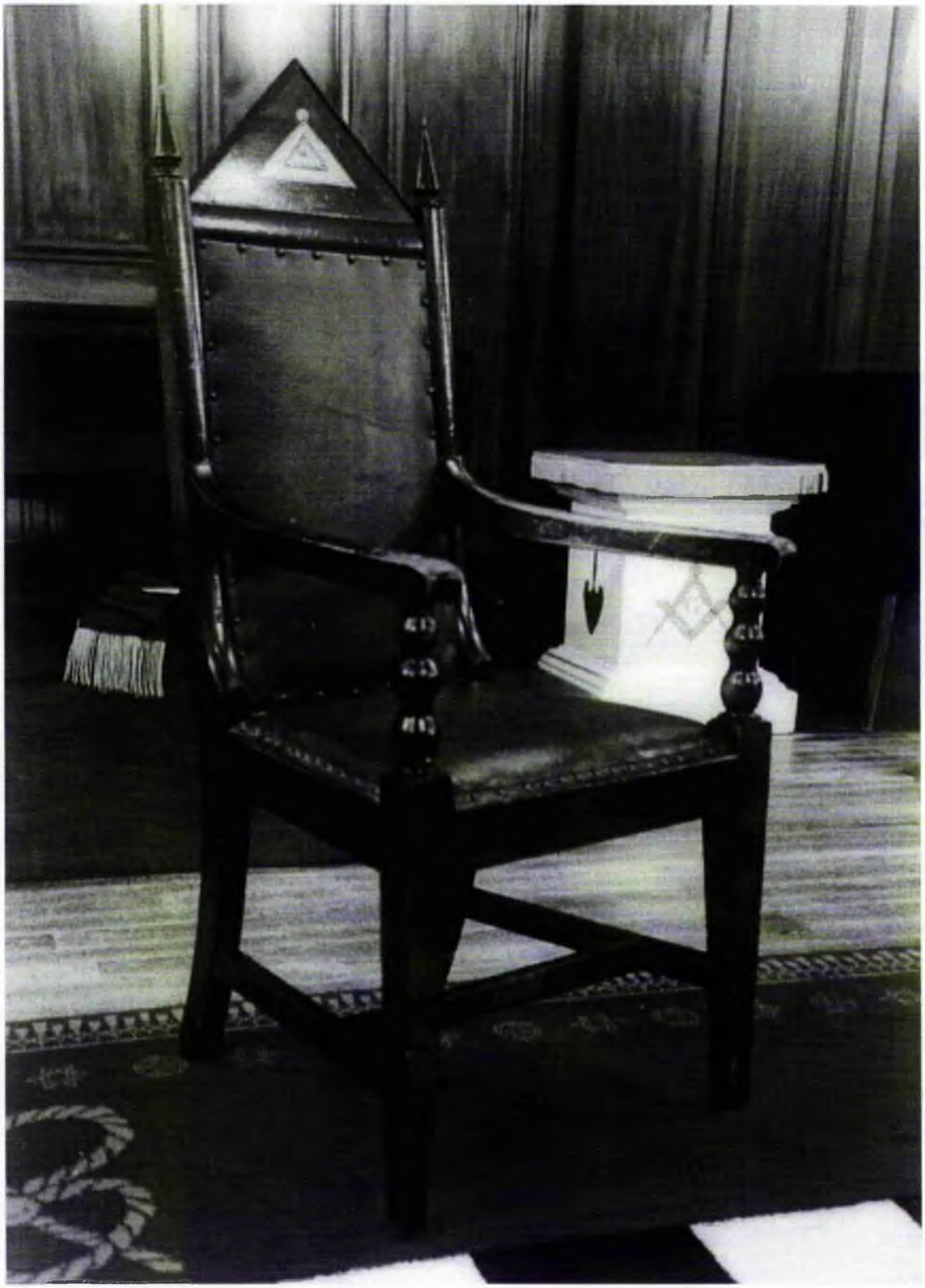
CATALOGUE 35

Peterhead
Keith Lodge

36 Four officers' chairs
beech, painted decoration
1867
For Wardens, Depute Master and Immediate Past Master. The upholstery at the back was added in 1941.
H: 154.5 W: 60.5/49.5 D: 54

37 Three officers' chairs
beech, painted decoration
1867 (one of 1898)
For Chaplain, Secretary and Treasurer. The upholstery at the back was added in 1941.
H: 121 W: 58/46.5 D: 53

CATALOGUE 36



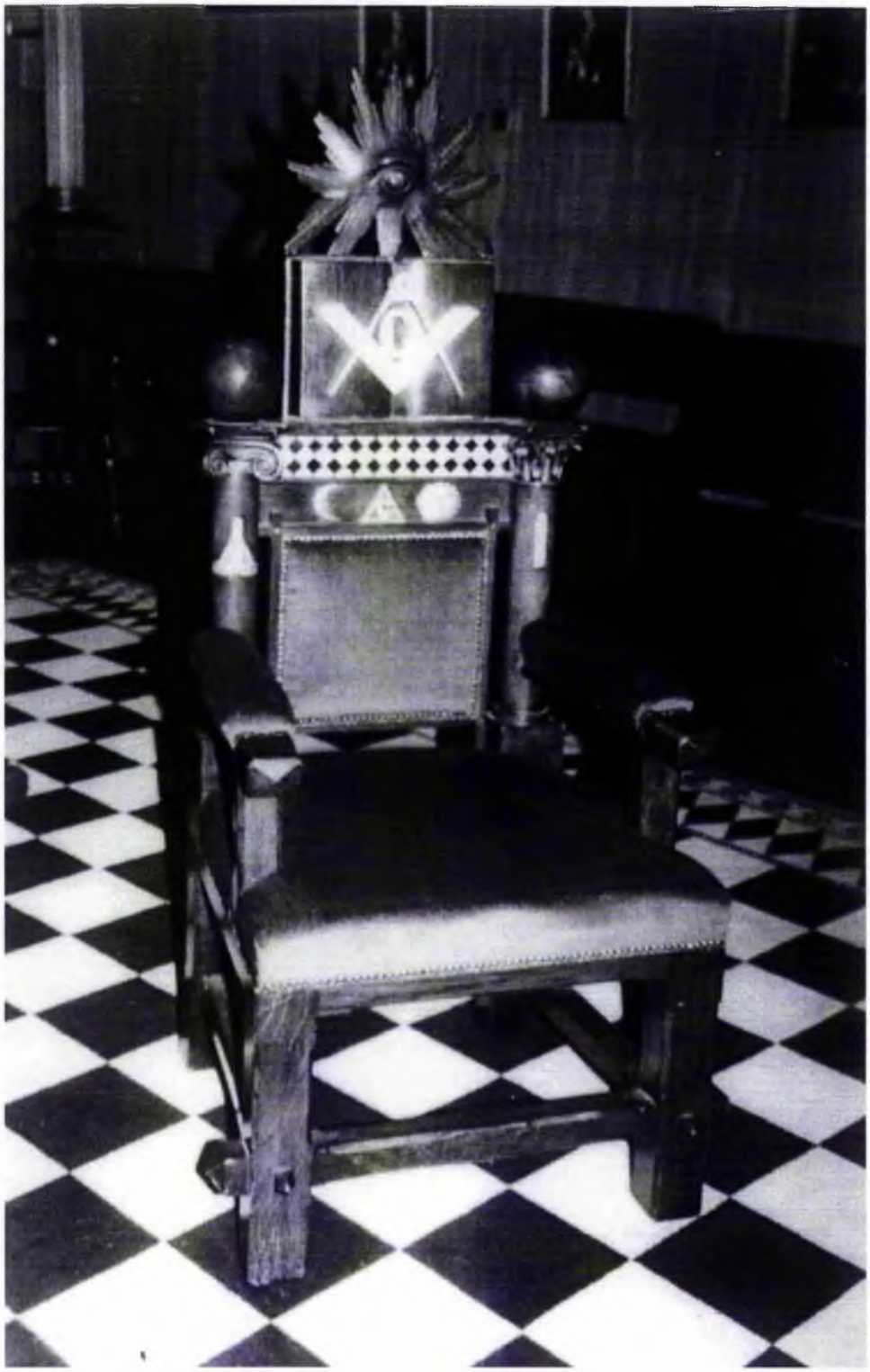
CATALOGUE 37

Inverness
Lodge St Mary Caledonian Operative

38 Master's chair
oak, painted decoration
1868
Insc: (at rear of top rail) *St Mary's Caledonian Operative Lodge / 339 / Freemasons. / Inverness. / 1868.*
H: 162 W: 66.5 D: 62.5

39 Senior Warden's chair
oak; painted decoration
1868
Some worm damage
H: 128 W: 60 D: 65.

40 Junior Warden's chair
oak; painted decoration
1868
H:127 W: 60 D: 65



CATALOGUE 38

CATALOGUE 39

CATALOGUE 40

Dundee
Lodge Operative

41 Robert Nicoll
Master's chair
oak & beech, steel springs
*c.*1870
Insc: *OPERATIVE LODGE 47* & (stamped at the rear of the back)
R. NICOLL / CABINET MAKER / DUNDEE.
H: 131 W: 53.5/46 D: 48

42 Robert Nicoll
Two Wardens' chairs
oak & beech, steel springs
*c.*1870
Insc: *47*
H: 120 W: 49.5/41.5 D: 44.5

Robert Nicoll ran a large furnishing business in Dundee between 1856 and 1887 but it is not known if he was associated with the Operative, or any other, Lodge. (*Post Office Directory & Mathew's Directory*)

CATALOGUE 41

CATALOGUE 42

Peterhead
Keith Lodge

43 Two Deacons' chairs
beech, painted decoration
1877
The upholstery at the back was added in 1941.
H: 121 W: 52/41 D: 47

CATALOGUE 43

Blairgowrie
Lodge St John

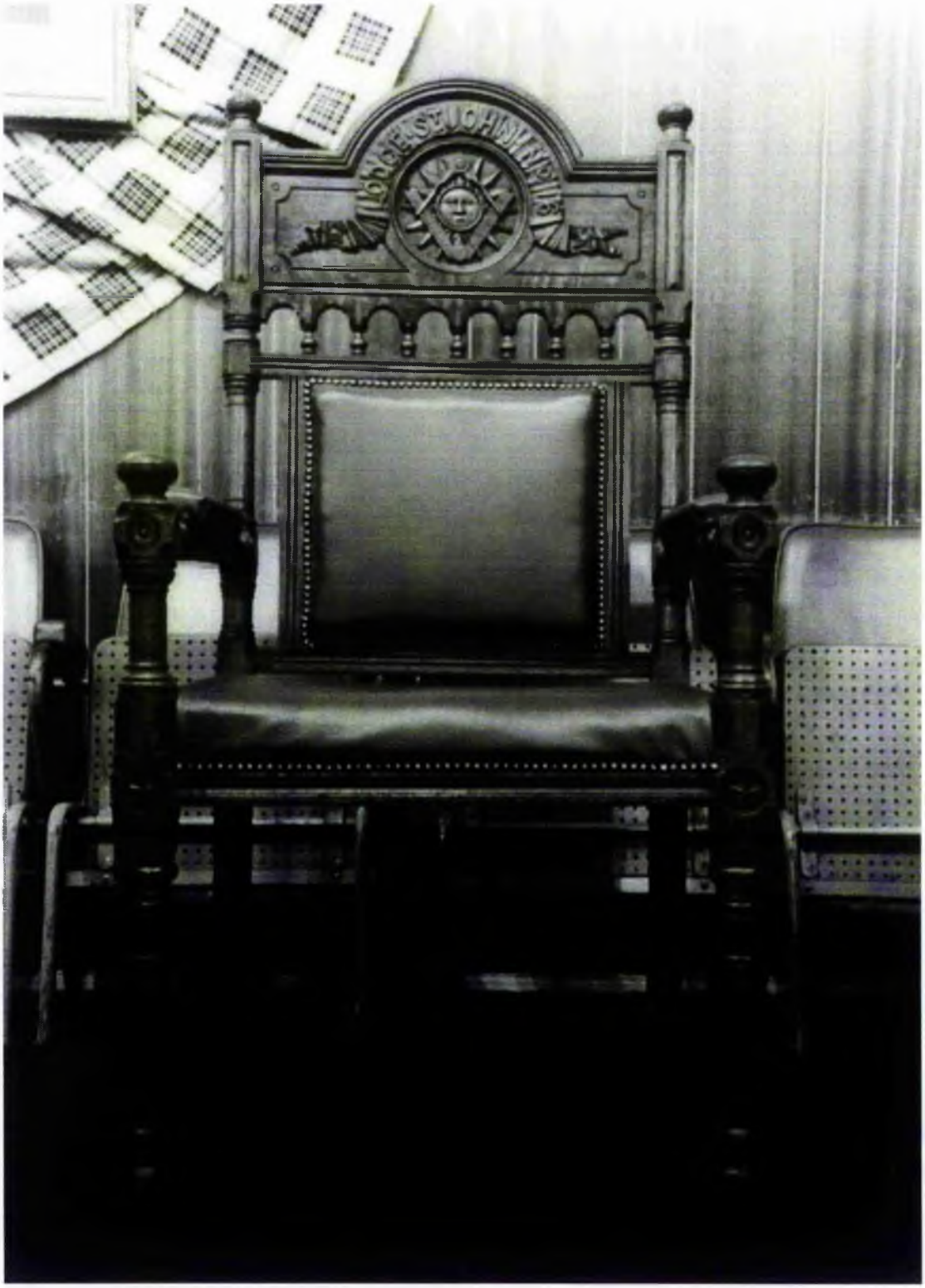
44 Master's chair
oak
1878
A plywood apron piece has been added and several decorated areas painted in metallic gold.
Insc: (ivory plaque inlaid into the rear of the cresting rail) *KENNING. MANUFACR.LONDON. LIVERPOOL & GLASGOW.*
H: 144 W: 70/59 D: 57

CATALOGUE 44

Falkirk
Lodge St John

45 Master's chair
oak
?1879
Insc: *LODGE ST. JOHN NO 16.*
H: 134 W: 71/61 D: 54

46 Two Wardens' chairs
oak
?1879
H:112 W: 63.5/53 D: 53



CATALOGUE 45

CATALOGUE 46

Arbroath
Lodge of St Thomas of Aberbrothock

47 Master's chair
oak
*c.*1880
H: 133 W: 65.5/57 D: 58.5

CATALOGUE 47

Dalkeith
Lodge Dalkeith Kilwinning

48 Master's chair
oak
*c.*1880
H: 144.5 W: 75/67 D: 56.5

CATALOGUE 48

Dunblane
The Lodge of Dunblane

49 Five officers chairs
oak
after 1887
The crest panel of each bears different carved emblems.
Master's chair: H: 126 W: 59/50 D: 52
Wardens', Depute Master's & Immediate Past Master's chairs: H: 120 W: 59/50 D: 52

CATALOGUE 49

Glasgow
The Prince's Lodge
(The Trades House, Glasgow)

50 Master's chair
oak
1892
Insc: *SIT / LUX ET LUX / FUIT / 1892* & (painted in gold upon the leather back upholstery) *THE PRINCE'S LODGE NO. 607.*
H: 168 W: 80 D: 62

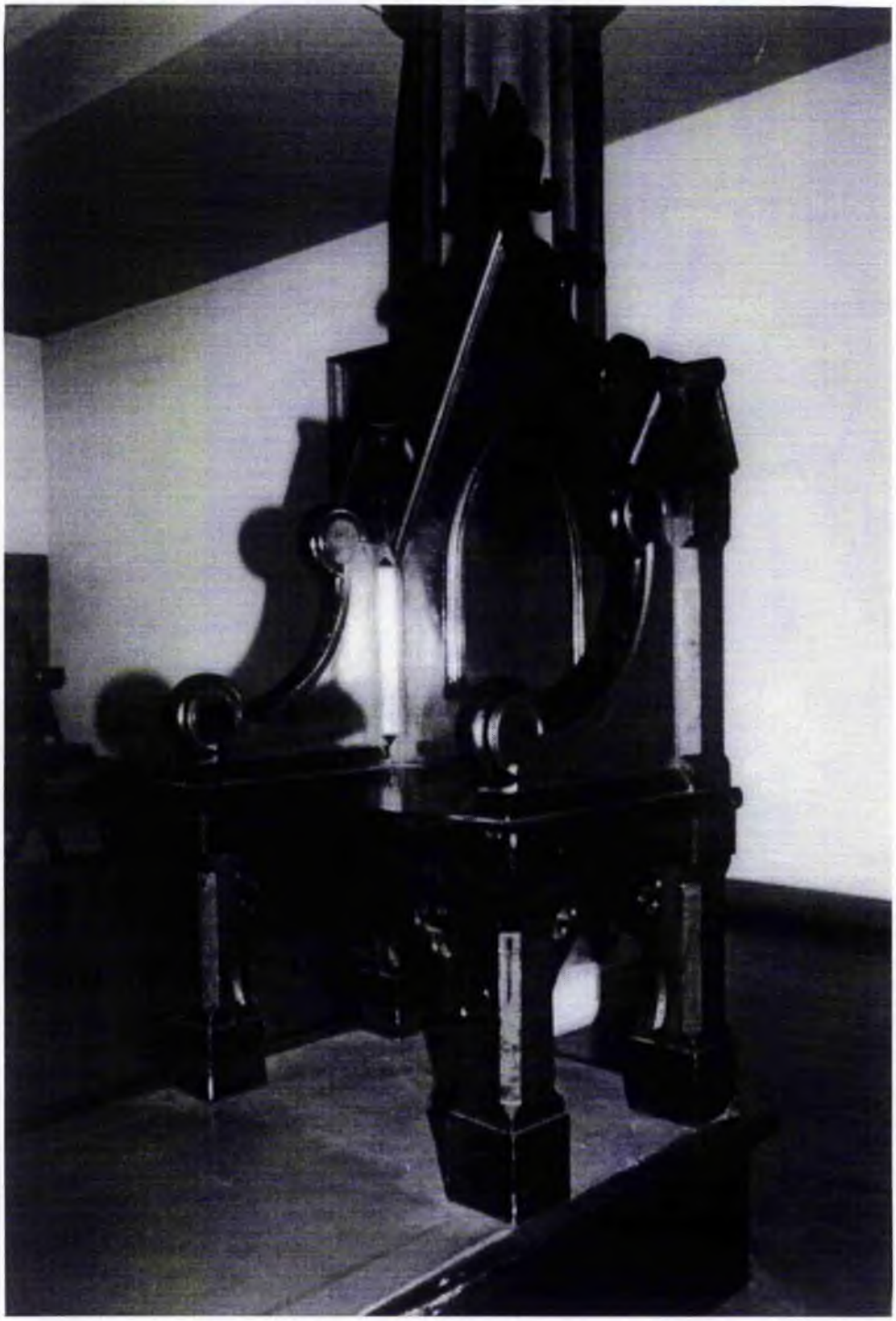
51 Two Wardens' chairs
oak
1892
Insc: (Senior Warden's chair) *WISDOM / STRENGTH AND / BEAUTY* & (Junior Warden's chair) *FIDES / FEDUCIA / FELICITE.* & (painted in gold upon the leather back upholstery of both) *THE PRINCE'S LODGE NO. 607.*
H: 142 W: 71 D: 55

CATALOGUE 50

CATALOGUE 51

Dumbarton
Lodge Dunmbarton Kilwinning

52 Two Wardens' chairs
oak & ?pine, painted
*c.*1900
H: 154 W: 73.5 D: 51



CATALOGUE 52

Dornoch

Lodge St Gilbert

53 Master's chair

oak

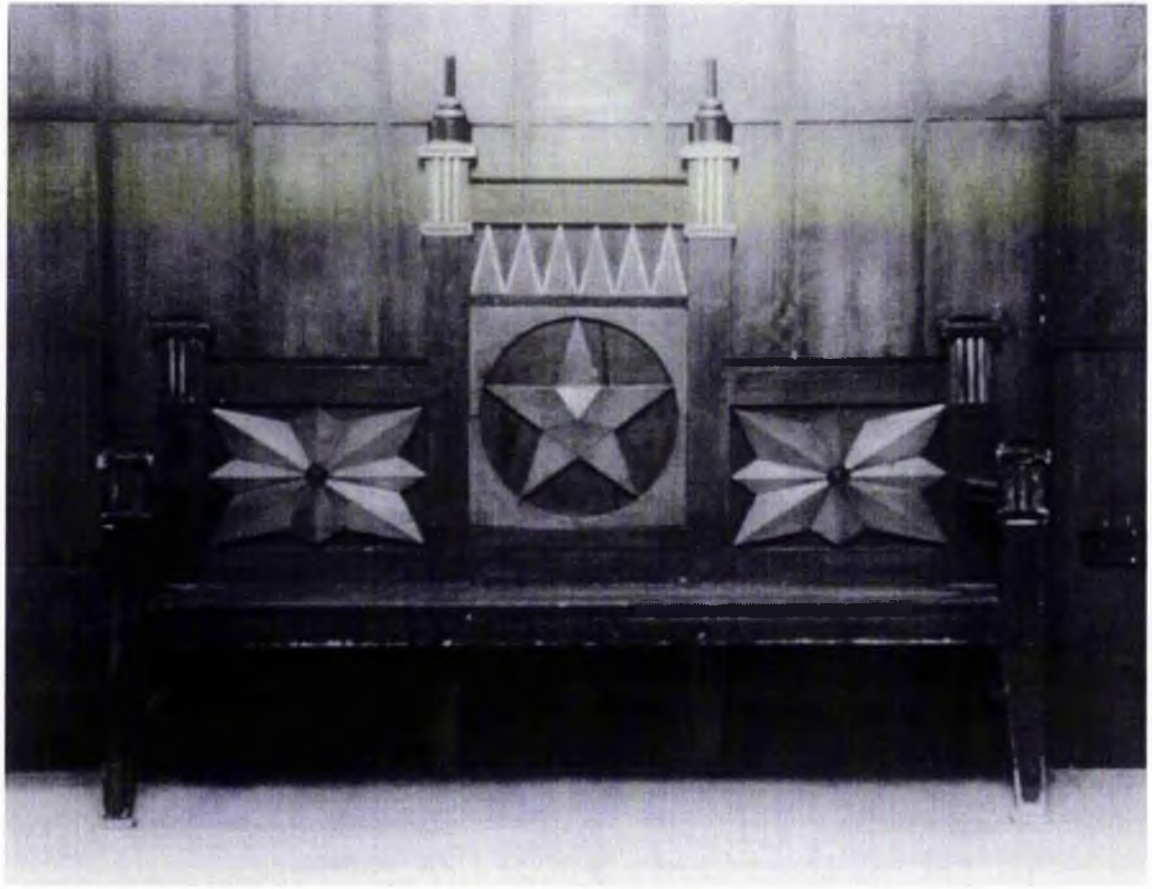
1893

Insc: יהי אור (Let there be Light) & שרת (?705) & (at the rear) *SEDILE HOC / REV: DON: GRANTAM: / LATOMORUM IN LOCO* [?]*MRH PRIMUS / SOCIETATI ARCHITECTONICAE SANCTI GILBERTI DE DURNACH / AL DONAVIT* [in mirror image]*93* (THIS CHAIR WAS GIVEN IN THE YEAR OF LIGHT [18]93 TO THE 'ARCHITECTURAL SOCIETY' OF ST GILBERT OF DORNOCH BY THE REVEREND DONALD GRANT THE FIRST [?]MASTER IN THE PLACE OF THE BUILDERS)

H: 144 W: 61/41 D: 48

Donald Grant (1848-1906) was the Church of Scotland minister in Dornoch between 1878 and 1906 and the first Master of the Lodge in 1893. The number of the Lodge on the roll of the Grand Lodge of Scotland has always been 790.

CATALOGUE 53



CATALOGUE 54

Edinburgh
St James's Operative Lodge
(Chapel of St John, Edinburgh)

55 Three officers' chairs
oak
*c.*1900
Insc: (brass plate at rear) *D.M.GOUDIELOCK / GLASGOW.*
Master's chair H: 139 W: 62.5/52 D: 57.5
Wardens' chairs H: 133 W: 57/47 D: 56

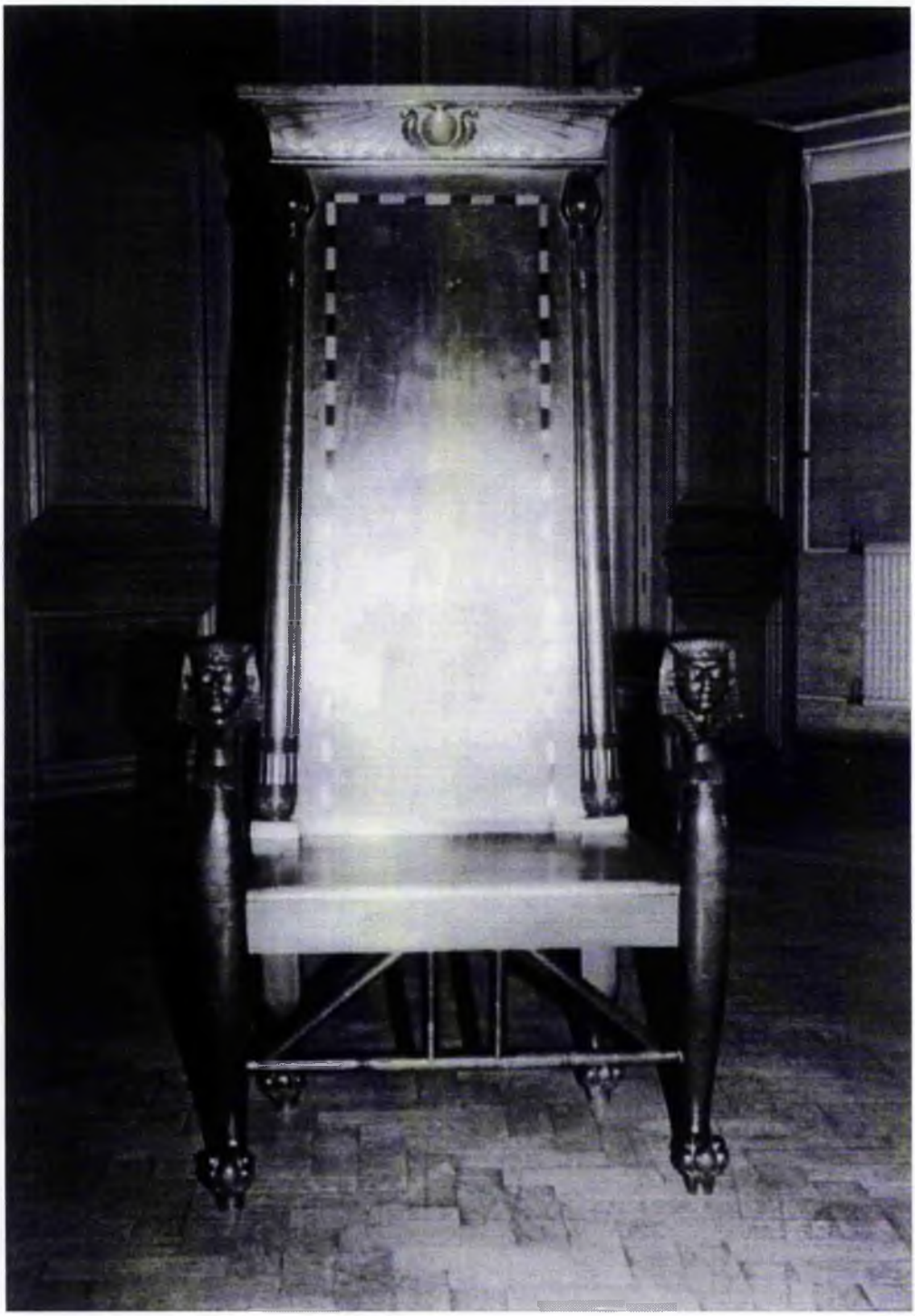
CATALOGUE 55

Edinburgh
Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Scotland
(Freemasons' Hall, Edinburgh)

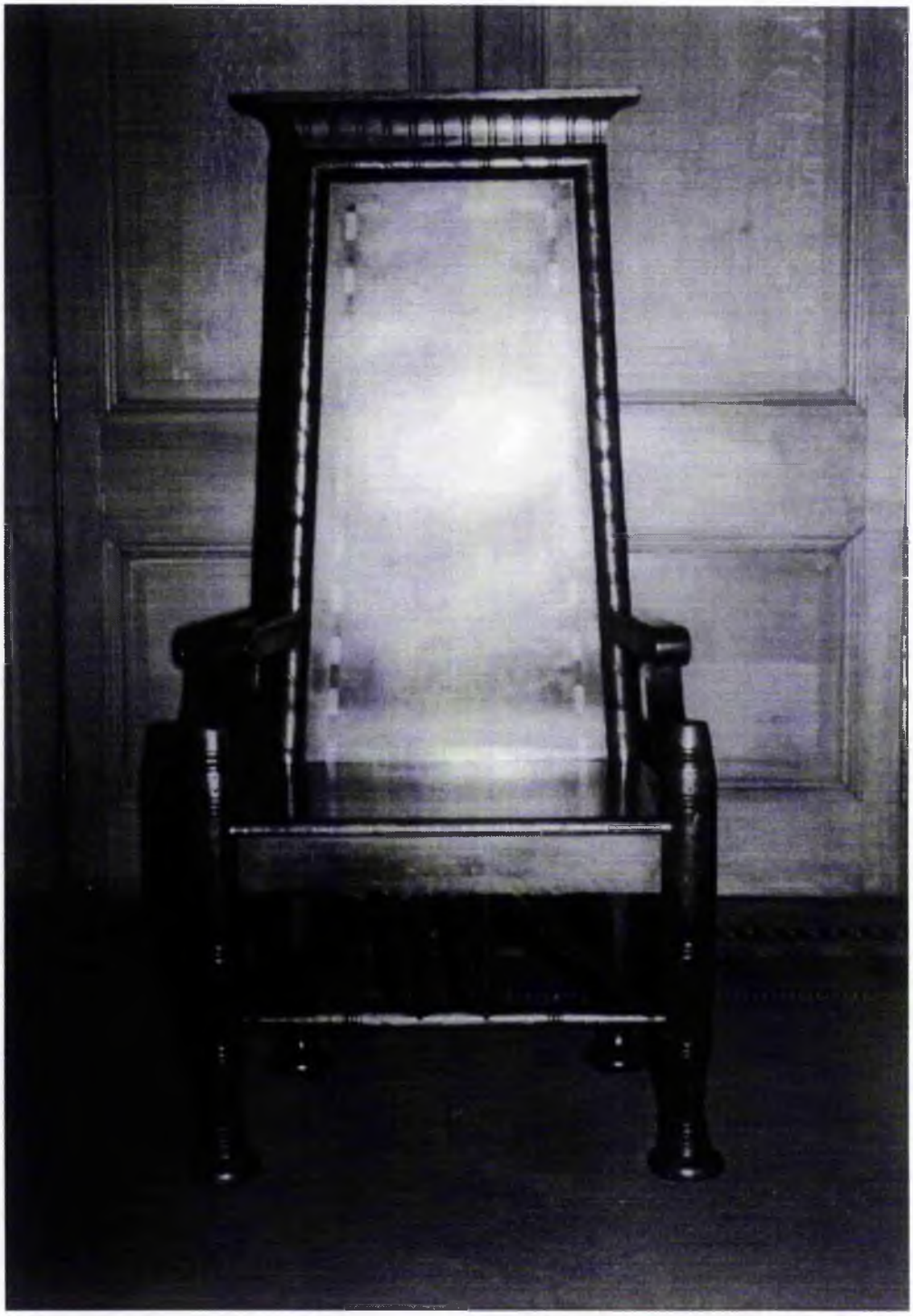
56 First Principal's chair
mahogany, ebony & boxwood
*c.*1901
Lit: Conner 1983, catalogue 227.
Exh: Brighton Museum and Manchester City Art Gallery (Conner 1983)
H: 165 W: 73/61.5 D: 58.5

57 Second & Third Principals' chairs
mahogany, ebony & boxwood
*c.*1901
H: 142 W: 65.5/53 D: 50.5

58 Three Sojourners' chairs
mahogany, ebony & boxwood
*c.*1901
H: 112 W: 65/54 D: 49



CATALOGUE 56



CATALOGUE 57

CATALOGUE 58

Arbroath
Lodge St Vigean

59 Master's chair
oak, painted decoration
1903
Insc: *LODGE ST. VIGEAN. / 101* & (brass plate glued to front seat rail) *THIS CHAIR WAS PRESENTED TO THE LODGE / BY / BROTHERS J.S.CHRISTIE, W.O.GRAY, W.MCWATTIE, / J.MOLLISON, D.OGILVIE, D.RITCHIE, & A.A.RODGERS / WHO WERE AT THE DATE OF PRESENTATION RESIDENT IN INDIA. JAMES RUXTON, R.W.M.*
H: 149 W: 66.5/56 D: 55

60 Two Wardens' chairs
oak
1903
H: 107.5 W: 64/47 D: 49

61 Two Deacons' chairs
oak
1903
H: 107.5 W: 46.5/40 D: 43

62 Secretary's and Treasurer's chairs
oak
1903
H: 100 W: 46.5/39 D: 43

CATALOGUE 59

CATALOGUE 60

CATALOGUE 61

CATALOGUE 62

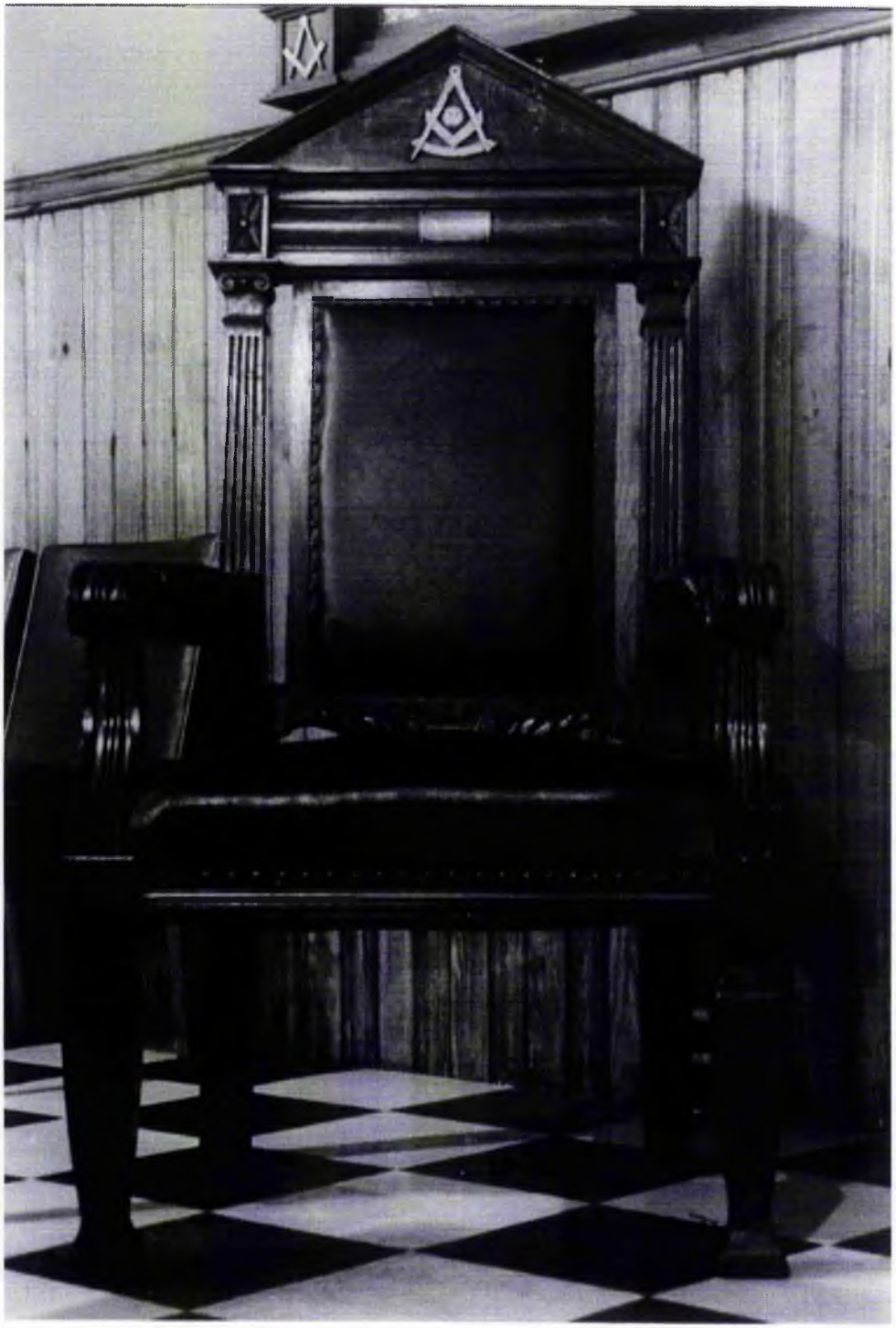
Alness
Lodge Averon

63 Three armchairs
oak
*c.*1903
Used as Master's and Wardens' chairs. One has lost two stretchers.
Insc: (brass plate affixed to the Master's chair) *Presented To Lodge Averon / By Bro. F. MacRae / 1903* & (brass plate affixed to one of the Warden's chairs) *Presented To Lodge Averon / By Bro. Jos. Ross / 1904*.
Master's chair: H: 145 W: 66/52 D: 71
Warden's chairs: H: 132 W: 66/51 D: 71

CATALOGUE 63

Aberdeen
Lodge St Machar

64 Three officers' chairs
oak
1904
Insc: (brass plate affixed to Master's chair) *ST. MACHAR LODGE NO. 319 / Presented by / Bro. Andrew Donald / R. W. M. / SEPTEMBER 1904* ; (brass plate affixed to Senior Warden's chair) *ST. MACHAR LODGE NO. 319 / Presented by / Bro. H.A.Holmes Past S. W. of St. George's Lodge No. 190 / SEPTEMBER 1904* & (brass plate affixed to Junior Warden's chair) *ST. MACHAR LODGE NO. 319 / Presented by / Bro. Dr Cristie D. M. And Bro. J.I.Wight / SEPTEMBER 1904*
H: 147 W: 71 D: 65



CATALOGUE 64

Linlithgow
Lodge Ancient Brazen

65 Master's chair
oak
1907
Insc: *THE LODGE / OF / LINLITHGOW / "ANCIENT BRAZEN" / NO. 17.*
H: 162 W: 71.5/50.5 D: 55

66 Two Wardens' chairs
oak
1907
Insc: (brass plate on Senior Warden's chair) *PRESENTED TO THE LODGE / BY / PAST MASTERS / ON / 13 February, 1907.*
H: 151.5 W: 6.5/61 D:48

CATALOGUE 65

CATALOGUE 66

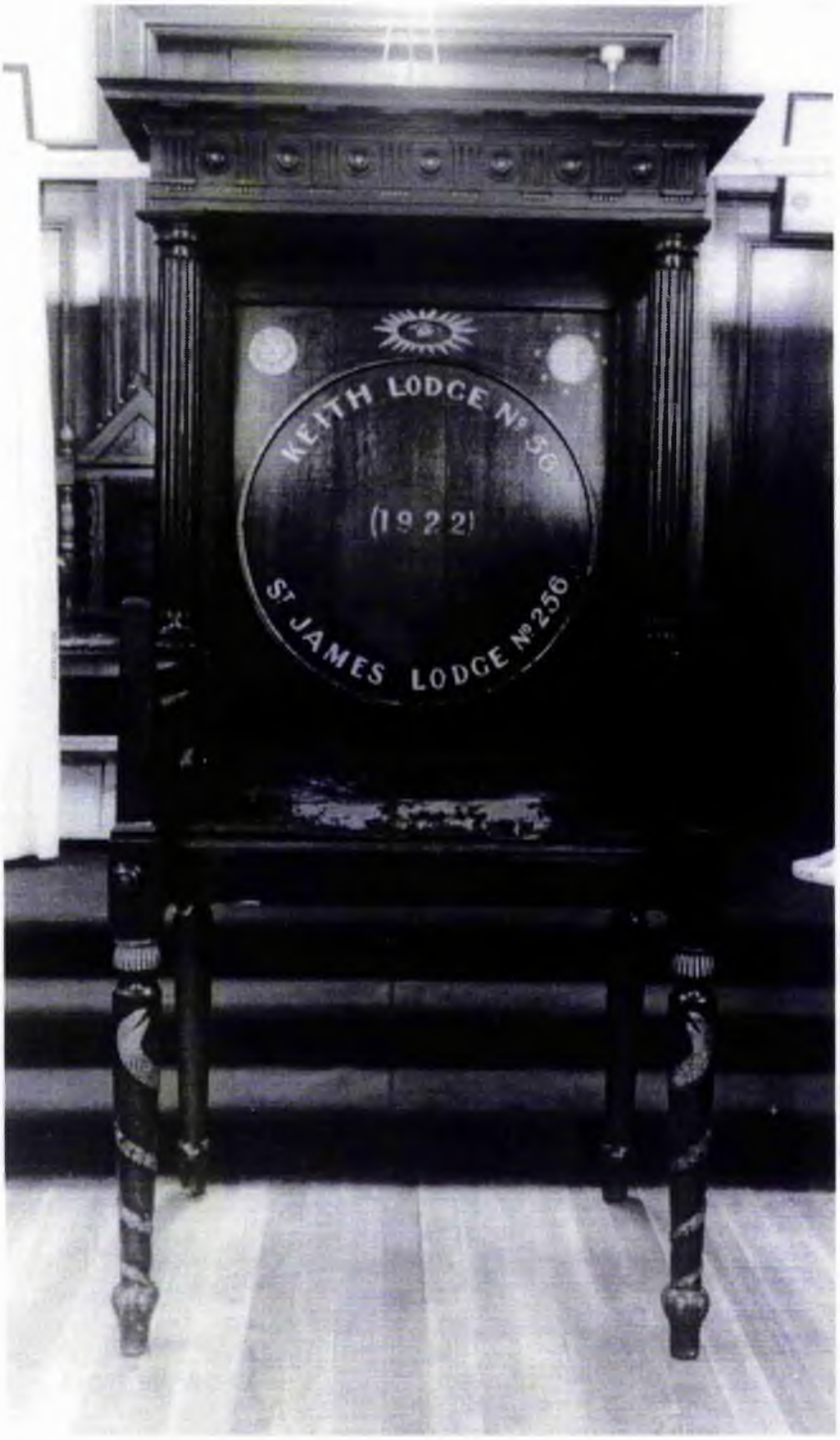
Dornoch
Dornoch Royal Arch Chapter

67 Two Principal's chairs
oak
1913
Insc: (brass plates, one on each chair) *Presented To / DORNOCH ROYAL ARCH CHAPTER / NO.374 / BY / COMPN. J.RIDEOUT M.E.H. / 1913.* & *Presented To / DORNOCH ROYAL ARCH CHAPTER / NO.374 / BY / COMPN. D.F.MCLEOD M.E.Z. / 1913.*
H: 138 W: 60.5/56.5 D: 61

CATALOGUE 67

Peterhead
Keith Lodge & Lodge St James

68 Master's chair
pine
1922
The rear of the left hand capital is damaged and there is a boss missing on the left hand side at the level of the seat, revealing that these are attached to iron bolts.
Insc: *KEITH LODGE NO.56 / (1922) / ST JAMES LODGE NO.256*
H: 197 W: 96 D: 74.



CATALOGUE 68

Inverness
Lodge of Old Inverness Kilwinning St John

69 Master's chair
?mahogany, painted decoration
after 1926
Insc: *Old Inverness Kilwinning St. John's No VI of Scotland* & (brass plaque on the front seat rail) *Presented by / Bro D. Lees Provan / Right Worshipful Master / 27th December / 1923 TO 1926.*
H: 131 W: 68.5 D: 55.

CATALOGUE 69

Glasgow
The Lodge of Glasgow St John
(The Trades House, Glasgow)

70 Master's chair
oak
?1920s
Insc: *THE LODGE OF GLASGOW ST. JOHN NO.3 BIS*
H: 146 W: 64/56 D: 58

71 Two Wardens' chairs
oak
?1920s
Insc: *THE LODGE OF GLASGOW ST. JOHN NO.3 BIS*
H: 137 W: 62/55 D: 54.5

CATALOGUE 70

CATALOGUE 71

Glasgow
Trades House of Glasgow Lodge
(The Trades House, Glasgow)

72 Senior Warden's chair
teak
1927
Insc: *CEANGLAIM* & (at the rear) *Senior Warden's chair. Made of Teak from Structure of HMS 'Glasgow' / Built at Govan 1909. Presented to the Trades House of Glasgow Lodge, No.1241 / By Bro. Gordon Cochrane S.W. 1926-27.*
H: 179 W: 74/65 D: 58

73 Junior Warden's chair
teak
1927
Insc: *CEANGLAIM* & (at the rear) *Junior Warden's chair. Made of Teak from Structure of HMS 'Glasgow' / Built at Govan 1909. Presented to the Trades House of Glasgow Lodge, No.1241 / By Bro. James Hendry J.W. 1926-27.*
H: 162 W: 71.5/62.5 D: 56

CATALOGUE 72

CATALOGUE 73

Dunkeld
St John's Lodge
(United Lodge of Dunkeld)

74 Three officer's chairs
larch
1928
Insc: (brass plate an all three) *LODGE NO.14 / THIS CHAIR IS MADE OF / WOOD FROM THE PARENT LARCH / 1928*
Master's chair H: 122 W: 63/51 D: 57
Wardens chairs H: 116 W: 59/49 D: 53

CATALOGUE 74

PEDESTAL FURNITURE

Dalkeith
Lodge Dalkeith Kilwinning

75 Master's pedestal
pine, painted
after 1764
There is room for a drawer, now missing.
H: 93 W(at base): 40.5

CATALOGUE 75

Perth
Lodge St Andrew at Perth

76 Two Wardens' pedestals
pine, painted
?second half of 18th century
H: 94 W(at base): 42

CATALOGUE 76

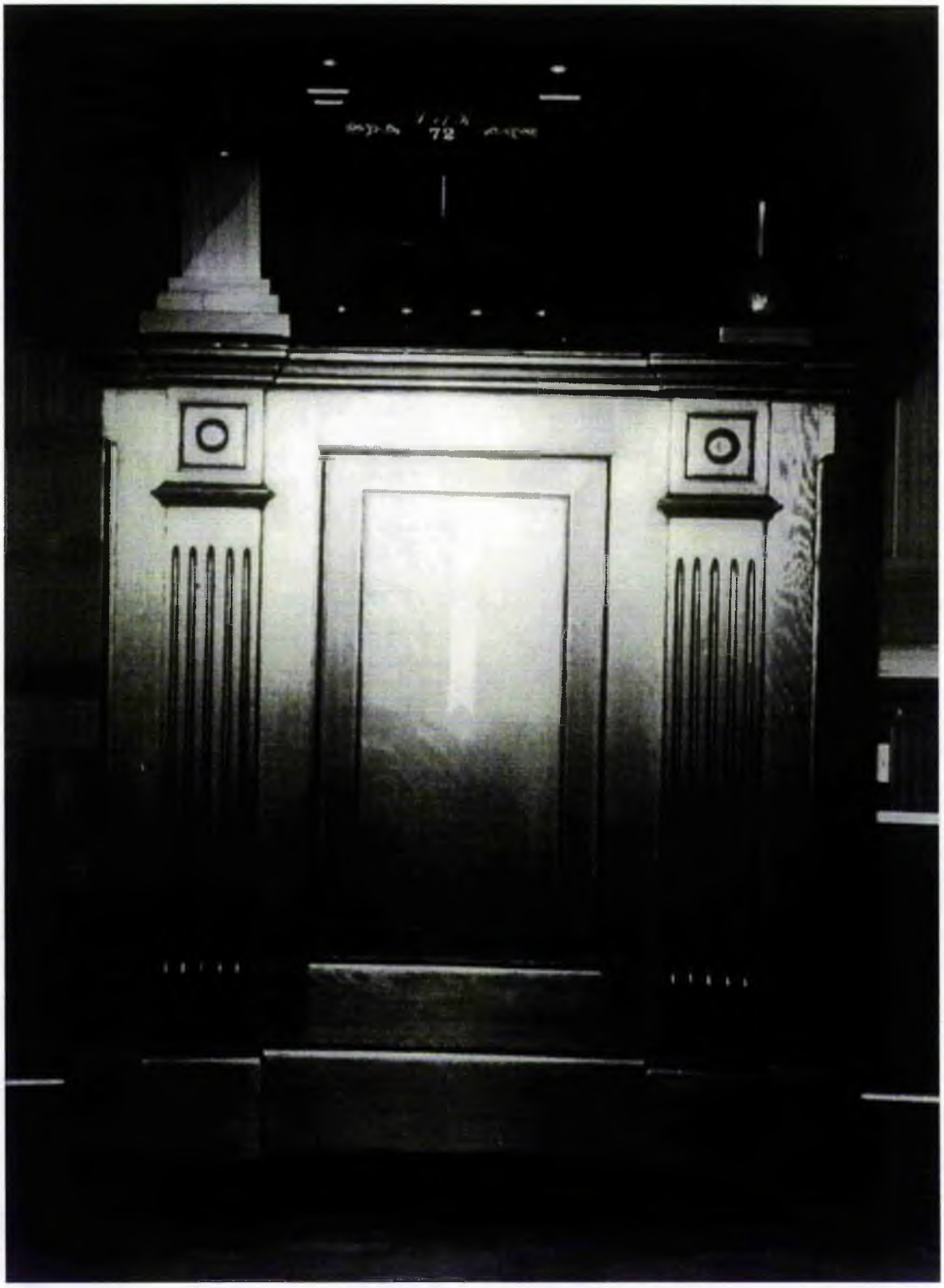
CATALOGUE 76

Kirkcaldy
The Lodge of Kirkcaldie

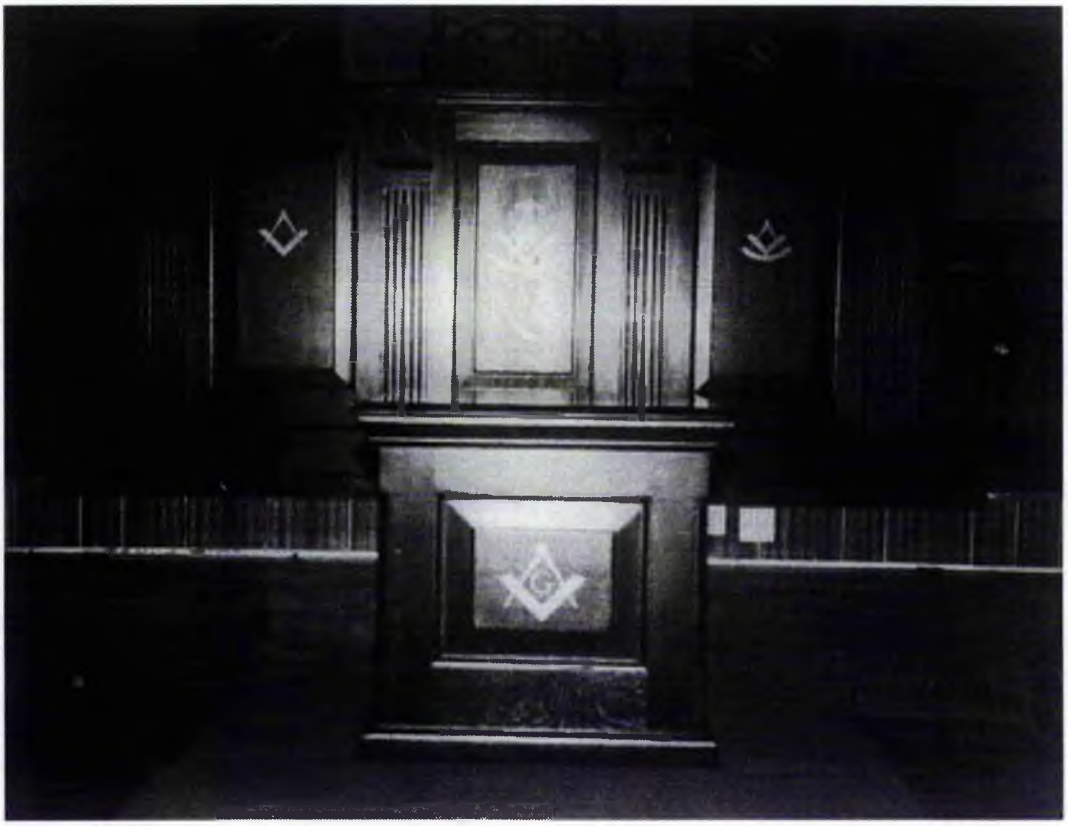
77 Two Wardens' pedestals
mahogany & boxwood
1821
H: 100 W: 96 D: 63

78 Master's bench
mahogany & boxwood
1823
H: 99.5 W: 216.5 D: 62

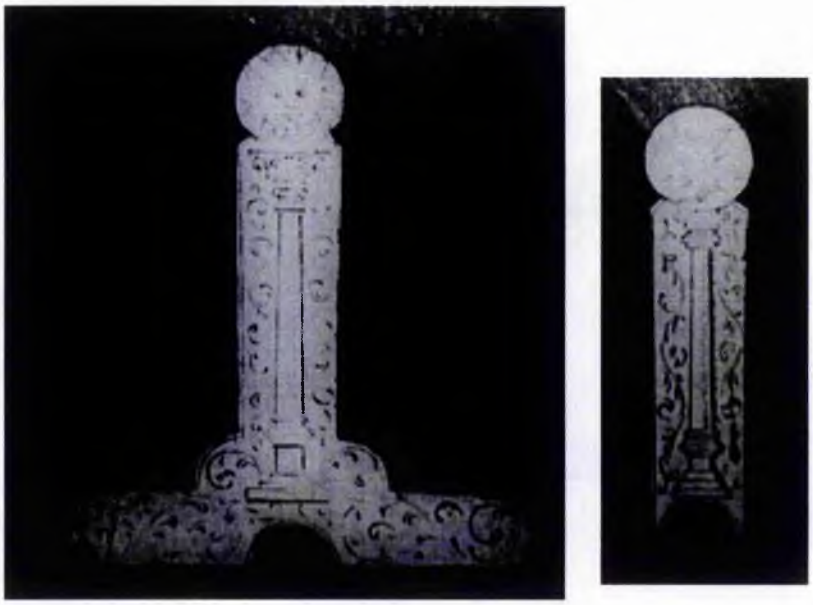
79 Altar
mahogany & boxwood
*c.*1823
H: 77 W: 56 D: 56



CATALOGUE 77



CATALOGUES 78 &79



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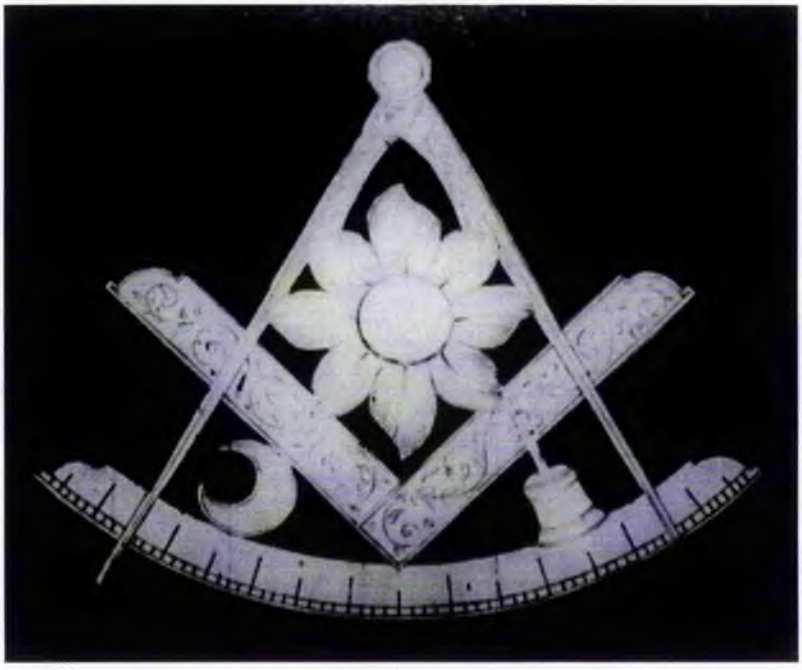


CATALOGUE 78

Dunkeld
Lodge Operative
(United Lodge of Dunkeld)

80 Altar
pine, painted
19th century
A wooden board has been added to the top.
Insc: *LODGE OPERATIVE / -152-*
H (not including addition): 71 W (at base): 43 D (at base): 36

CATALOGUE 80

Blairgowrie
Lodge St John

82 Three pedestals
oak
1878
A circular piece of baise is laid into the front left hand side of the top.
H: 81 W: 59 D: 60

CATALOGUE 82

CATALOGUE 83

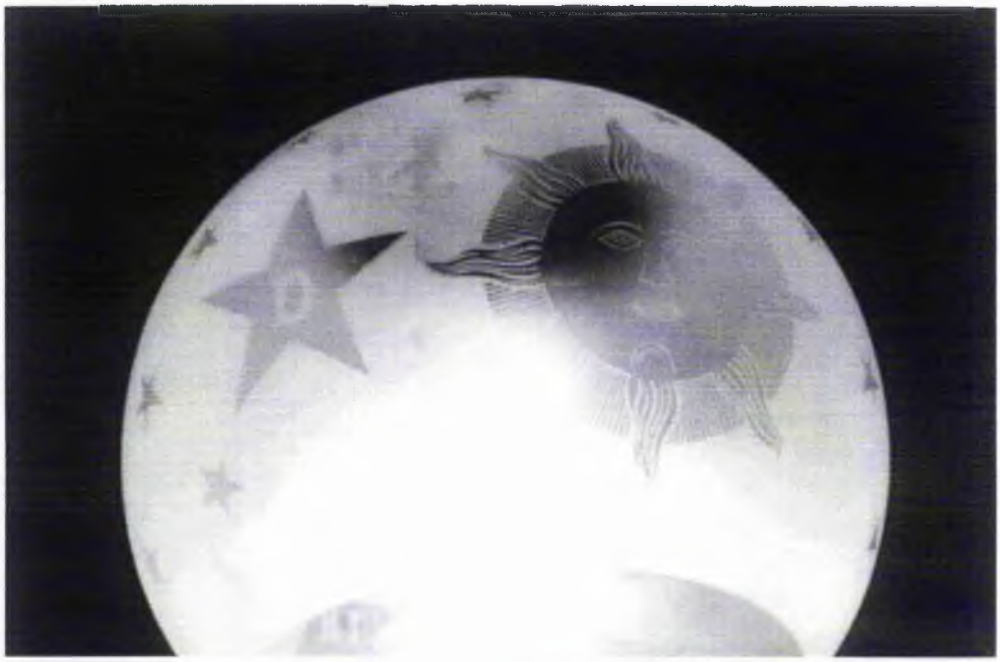
Dunblane
The Lodge of Dunblane

84 Master's pedestal
oak
after 1887
There is an integral brass standard lamp, adapted for an electric bulb.
H: 108 W (at base): 44

85 Altar
oak, painted decoration
after 1887
At the rear there are a drawer and reading form.
Insc: *TRUTH / S*[OLOMON] *K*[ING OF] *I*[SREAL] *H*[IRAM] *K*[ING OF] *T*[YRE] */ BEAUTY / WISDOM / STRENGTH / H*[IRAM] *A*[BIF] *B*[UILDER].
H: 93.5 W (at base): 54

CATALOGUE 84

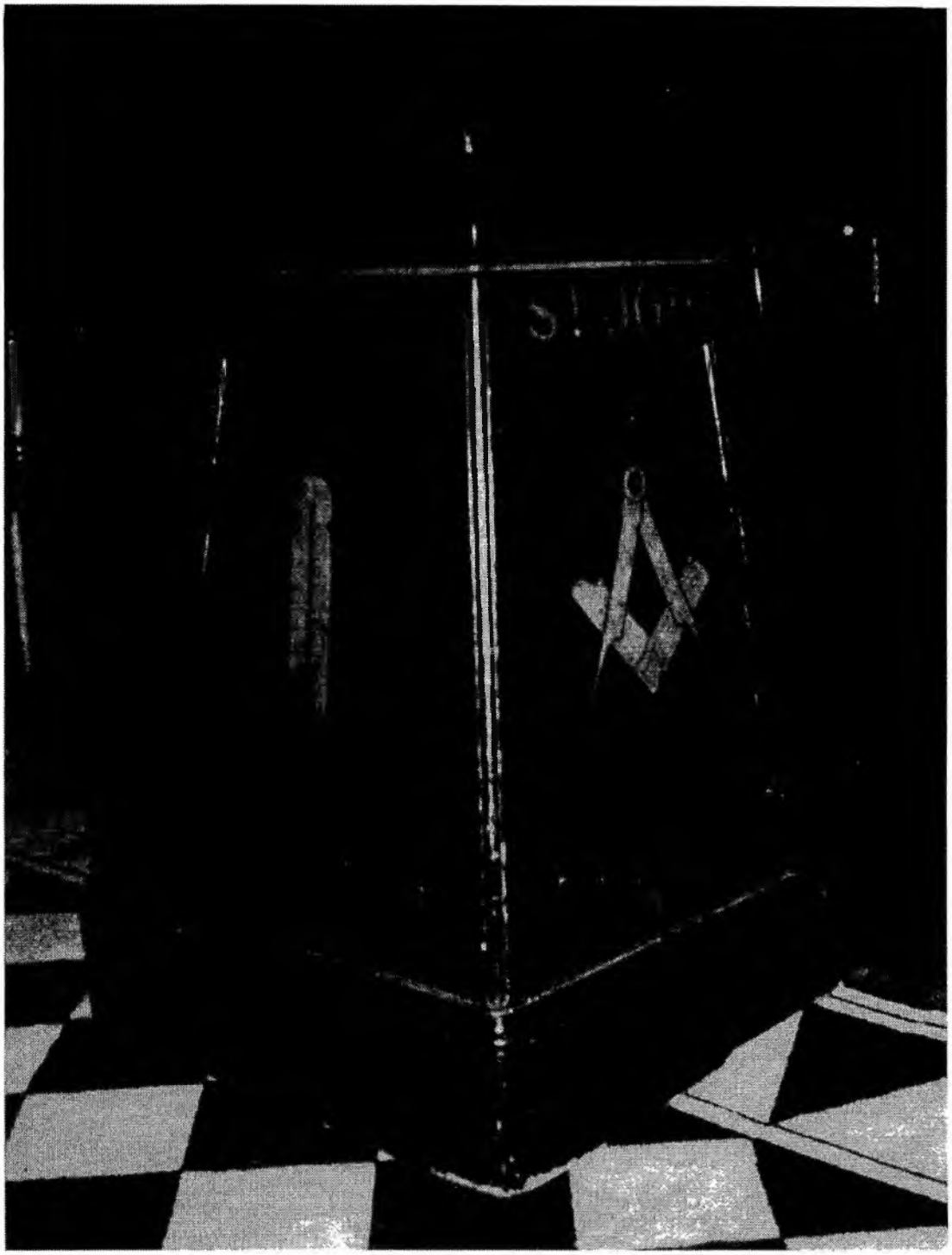
CATALOGUE 85



CATALOGUE 84

Maybole
Lodge St John

86 Altar
pine, painted
1889
Insc: (silver plate) *Presented by / Bro. Hugh R. Wallace / TO LODGE ST. JOHN NO.11 / MAYBOLE / 1889.*
H: 82 W: 38 D: 37



CATALOGUE 86

Dumbarton
Lodge Dumbarton Kilwinning

87 Two Wardens' pedestals
oak, painted
*c.*1900
Dimensions unknown

CATALOGUE 87

Aberdeen
Lodge St Machar

88 Three pedestals
oak
*c.*1904
The Master's pedestal has extendable flaps at the sides. Each has draws.
H: 95 W: 62.5 (with hinged flaps: 124.5) D: 49

CATALOGUE 88

Dornoch
Lodge St Gilbert

89 Three pedestals
?mahogany
after 1893
H: 87 W (at base): 54

Glasgow
The Lodge of Glasgow St John
(The Trades House, Glasgow)

90 Master's pedestal
oak
?1920s
Part of the base is missing.
Insc: *THE LODGE OF GLASGOW SAINT JOHN NO.3 BIS*
H: 97 W: 82 D: 47.5

91 Senior Warden's pedestal
oak & bronze
?1920s
Insc: (bronze vesica plate) *THE LODGE OF GLASGOW SAINT JOHN NO.3 BIS*
H: 91.5 W: 77 D: 45.5

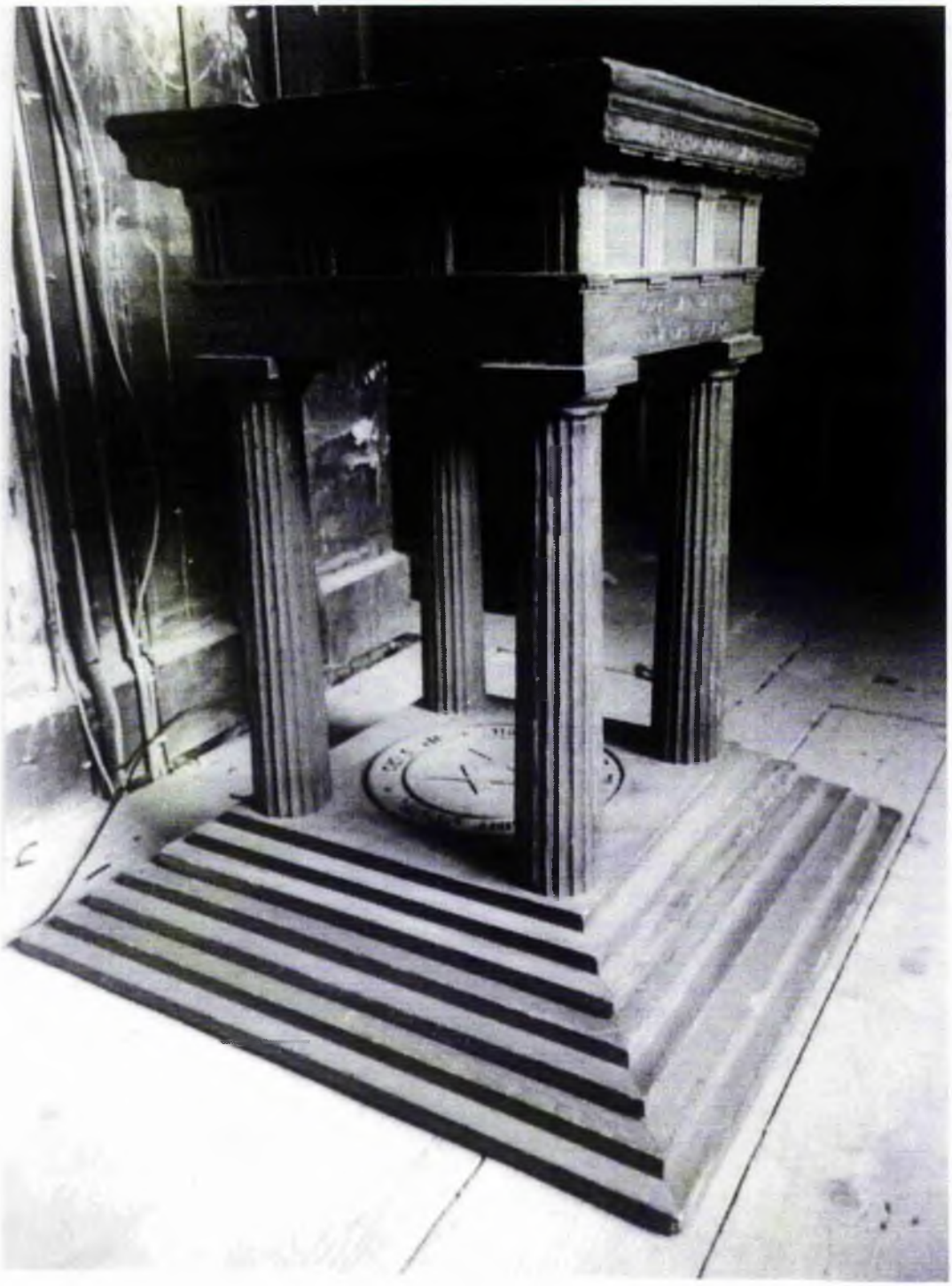
92 Junior Warden's pedestal
oak & bronze
?1920s
Insc: (bronze vesica plate) *THE LODGE OF GLASGOW SAINT JOHN NO.3 BIS*
H: 92 W: 85.5 D: 43.5

93 Altar
oak
?1920s
Insc: *THE LODGE OF GLASGOW SAINT JOHN NO.3 BIS & THE GREAT WAR 1914-1918 / 'THEIR NAME LIVETH FOR EVERMORE' / THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-1945* and the names of 22 individuals

CATALOGUE 90

CATALOGUE 91

CATALOGUE 92

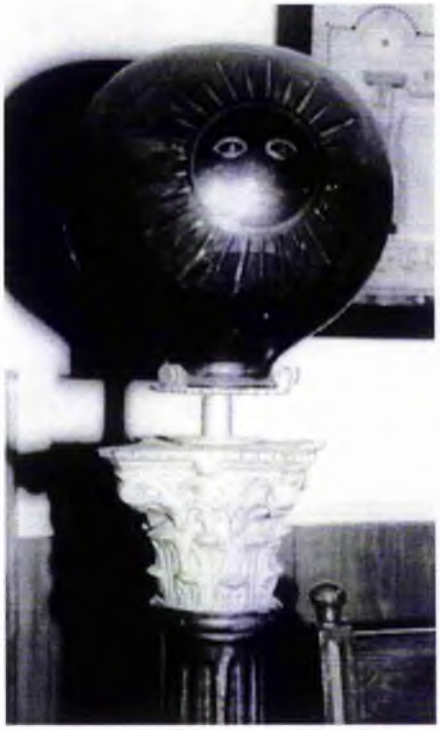


CATALOGUE 93

TORCHERES, CANDLESTICKS & PILLARS

Falkirk
Lodge St John

94 Three torchères
oak, part painted, metal & glass
?1879
Adapted for electric bulbs. Each glass shade is cut with a different design. Each column is surmounted by a capital of one of three classical orders.
H:178



CATALOGUE 94

Glasgow
The Lodge of Glasgow St John
(The Trades House, Glasgow)

95 Master's candlestick
oak & bronze
?1920s
H: 106.5 W (at base): 25

96 Senior Warden's candlestick
oak & bronze
?1920s
H: 102 W (at base): 24.5

97 Junior Warden's candlestick
oak & bronze
?1920s
H: 111 W (at base): 25

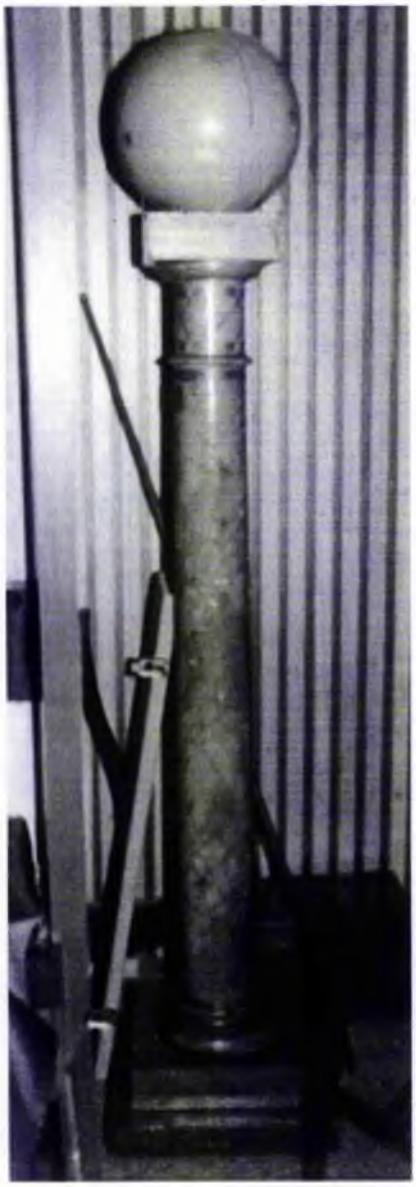
CATALOGUES 95, 96 & 97

Dundee
Lodge Operative

98 Pillar with terrestrial globe
?oak, painted
1907
Insc: (silver plaque) *Presented / To / MASONIC LODGE OPERATIVE NO.47 / By / BRO JAS. D. DURKIE R.W.M. / ON ATTAINING HIS MASONIC MAJORITY / 24TH DECEMBER 1907.*
Dimensions unknown

99 Pillar with celestial globe
?oak, painted
1907
Insc: (silver plaque) *Presented / To / MASONIC LODGE OPERATIVE NO.47 / By / BRO JAS. D. DURKIE R.W.M. / ON ATTAINING HIS MASONIC MAJORITY / 24TH DECEMBER 1907.*
Dimensions unknown

CATALOGUE 98



CATALOGUE 99